when blood spills over generations

Iraq
Censored
Crisis

human consequences of wars on Iraq:
a closer look

A publication by ***bhoomika***

Ariane, 13 year-young girl (on the cover page) is in a paediatric hospital in Baghdad, Iraq while this publication is on its way to press. She has leukemia.

There has been a manifold increase in the incidence of leukemia in Iraq since the 1991 war. Experts are linking the increased incidence of leukemia with the impact of depleted-uranium laced bombs used by the US and their allies in 1991.

88,500 tons of bombs and other ammunition (equivalent to 7 Hiroshimas) were used to bomb Iraq and Kuwait in 1991, many of them laced with depleted uranium, a radioactive killer. The bombing by US and their allies left a long trail of mortality and morbidity.

Ariane's is not a case in isolation...

Cover page adapted from Poster Journal, series number 9, 2002, brought out by Vikas Adhyaya Kendra, Mumbai

when blood spills over generations

human consequences of wars on Iraq: a closer look

A publication by
bhoomika

when blood spills over generations

human consequences of wars on Iraq: a closer look

March 2003

We thank the authors. We thank every source from where the articles are reprinted.
This publication is sold for its actual printing and developing costs. Any proceeds extra than this will go to support anti-war and pro-peace initiatives. Therefore this compilation is intended for the purpose of research and education and is not meant to be a profit making endeavor.

Acknowledgements

Unni, Sasi, Sanjana, Kamaan, Bala, Nilanjana, Usha, Shobha, Hassan Mansoor, Gopal, David, Girish, Max Martin and others involved in the anti-war initiatives in Bangalore, who have helped in compiling, editing and helping us bring this book out. Thanks to all of you

Cover page design: **Sasi**
Cover Photos: **Unni**

printed at
prakruti mudrana
51, 29th cross, 9th main,
banashankari - 2nd stage, bangalore -560070
ph: 080-6713894

a publication by
bhoomika
51, 29th cross, 9th main,
banashankari - 2nd stage,
bangalore -560070
ph: 080-6713894
email: uvaraj@vsnl.net

Rs. 30/- in India & US $2 outside India (Postage extra)

This publication can be downloaded from: www.indiadisasters.org/iraq

STOP BLOOD OVER GENERATIONS !

Truth and lives become the primary casualties in a war. But in Iraq these are casualties even in "peace" times. Today (on March 11th 2003, while this is going to the press) officially the war is not on. Officially it is "peace time." However, in Iraq, over 6,000 children die every month due to sanctions related reasons. 1.2 million people, including over 750,000 children, died in the first seven years of sanctions. This is mass murder in slow motion. Another war will fast forward it. We need to STOP this war.

Sanctions kill. So do weapons. Wars devastat lives and divert the precious resources to unnecessary arms race. Another war on Iraq is not only bad for the people of Iraq, it is bad for the people of the region and the rest of the world.

Peace is not just the absence of war. Testimonies by humanitarian workers who have been to Iraq give a blow-by-blow account of the plight of ordinary people, especially women and children. They are in an extremely vulnerable situation. Any further difficulty will amplify their miseries. A war is just not acceptable.

The aggression that is actively pursued by the President of USA and the Prime Minister of UK is not just about Iraq, it is colonisation recycled. Their job is made easier by the process of unequal globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. When arms lobby (read private commercial interests) places profits over lives, another war is just a button away. This is an immoral act and this war must be stopped.

The recent weeks have witnessed rewriting of history. Perhaps we are witnessing the largest collective demonstrations in the history of social movements all over the world, including the USA and UK, the two countries that have the largest pile of weapons of mass destruction. How can these two countries safeguard the security of any country, including their own citizens? "We pray that Bush finds a new enemy and spares us," said an old man in Baghdad to one of us. In the world, democracies ensure that they have a president at people's disposal. But the US looks like a country where its president believes that he has a country at his disposal.

Millions of people are protesting in hundreds of cities all over the world. We are not talking about a few million people, but the collective will of the humanity. Students, elders, ordinary people, activists, peace workers, journalists, writers and this list continues. They have been able to demonstrate that public opinion can delay a war. Extend your solidarity to this collective consciousness. It will help to stop another war, this time on Iraq.

We hope this publication will help you understand the ground realities in Iraq, the issues related, and thus help strengthen your commitment and arguments against a war.

Read it ! Use it ! Circulate it !

Children of a lesser world

By Unnikrishnan P.V. and S. Parasuraman

Baghdad, Feb 2nd week, 2003

Mariam Fahemi should have been just another happy three-year-old, singing and dancing on the Muslim festival day of Id in her village. But she is not. She spent the festival in the critical-care ward of a paediatric hospital here, weeping quietly, writhing in extreme pain.

Mariam is among several hundred children with serious illnesses admitted here, awaiting an uncertain future even as the international community is engaged in a last-ditch attempt to prevent yet another war in Iraq.

With its medical system crippled by the 1991 Gulf War and an unkind embargo that followed, for Mariam and the other children in the hospital, the chances to celebrate their next birthday look increasingly dim.

The 350-bed Saddam Central Paediatric and Teaching Hospital may look like a speciality hospital elsewhere in the world. Just that there are not enough medicines or medical supplies to cater to the people who rush here from all over Iraq. It is yet another victim of the war.

So is Mariam, in all probability. She was diagnosed to have leukaemia when she was ten months old, condemned to spend her toddling years in a hospital bed. Her parents bring her to hospital for a 10-day treatment schedule, followed by another 10-day bed rest back home. Then within two weeks she is back again in hospital. And the routine continues.

"We wish we could keep her in the hospital for a longer time," says Mr. Fahemi Juad, Mariam's father. But the doctors are more realistic. "We have numerous cases like this. We need to accommodate everyone," says Dr. Mohammed Alam, the paediatrician who treats Mariam. "With each passing day, the caseload is increasing. We just don't have the space and resources to keep them here. Patients take turn."

Dr Alam, a young paediatrician, says there has been a sharp increase in blood cancer caseload since the 1991 war. "Before 1991, we rarely used to get such cases, say, a maximum of two such cases every three months. But now, we get more than two such cases, every week."

Dr Alam's impressionistic account has some research back up too. Rosalie Bertell, the world-renowned radiation expert, wrote in her recent book, *Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War,* referring to Iraq: "Cancer rates appear to be significantly higher than the world average... The suspected culprit is depleted uranium, a toxic and radioactive metal extensively used in the bombing by the US and their allies." Depleted Uranium is a killer. It kills those who are already born, would not spare even the children who weren't born when it was dropped.

Experts have documented that depleted-uranium-induced cancer has been increasing manifold in Iraq. The bombing campaign by the US forces and their allies has left a long trail of morbidity.

As for Mariam, the condition is worsening. She was surviving on water just before we met her in the hospital in February second week. She just refused to take food. Her mother Mrs Souzanne Adelgami is also worried about her other three children, who are left at home alone.

Souzanne listens hopefully when her husband shows the picture of his friend's family. They too have a 14-year-old son who is struggling with leukaemia, who is back at home for Id. "He will be back at hospital in a few days," the doctors note.

The family is putting together all resources to save Mariam. "I have managed to deposit eight bottles of blood from friends and others to the blood bank. The blood bank will give that much in return for my child," says Mariam's father. "I need to get more bottles to keep her going." A precious investment to save an ailing child. A life-saving barter when the global market tries to insulate itself from a war that might just tumble it.

Next to Mariam's bed is 10-year-old Lamia, another girl whose future is blurred with leukaemia. She is from Basra, a city that was pulverized by US air force in the Gulf War. Basra, a southern city located 500 kilometres away from Baghdad, has yet to recover.

Lamia looks pale and tiny. In 1997, UNICEF estimated that 32 percent of children under five, some 960,000 children, were chronically malnourished—a rise of 72 percent since the imposition of sanctions in 1991. Of them 23 per cent were underweight - twice as high as the levels found in neighbouring Jordan or Turkey. The situation has further deteriorated since then.

Lamia has bloodstained cotton on her nose, a grim reminder of the seriousness of her condition. She is still bleeding, a bad omen for a leukaemia patient. We present her a weak smile. Lamia is too tired even to smile back at her visitors.

The doctors are tired too. "We don't have medicines. It takes several months to get some supplies," says a duty doctor. "The embargo is something in letters, another in policy and something else in practice. But we know for sure is, sanctions kill children." It is difficult to get even medical journals.

Sanctions-related reasons were behind the deaths of tens of thousands of children in Iraq, humanitarian agencies point out. The silent funeral continues for 12 years, and counting. In Iraq, infant mortality rate has gone up from 47 per 1000 births before sanctions to over 108 after it. That is more than 100 per cent increase in ten years. A survey by UNICEF in 1999 showed that in places in south and central Iraq, children under five years were dying more than twice the rate before the depleted uranium bombing and imposition of sanctions. Add to this the unending psychosocial trauma children like Mariam and Lamia and their families are going through.

In the last 30 days, over 6,000 children died due to sanctions and war induced medical and health reasons in Iraq. Another 6,000 will die in the next 30 days, medical workers warn. This is a mass murder in slow motion. Another war will only fast forward it. These are children of a lesser world.

Can you imagine such a scenario in London or New York?

This real account story was recorded by the authors during their visit to Baghdad during second week of February for an ActionAid mission. The opinions expressed need not necessarily reflect that of the organisation.

Dr. Unnikrishnan P.V. is a doctor working on humanitarian issues. He is associated with ActioAid and the People's Health Movement. Prof. S. Parasuraman is the Policy Coordinator, ActionAid Asia regional office, Bangkok.

Collateral Damage:
The health and environmental costs of war on Iraq

(A joint report by MEDACT and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.
Access the full report at www.medact.org)

Executive Summary

Up to four million people could die in a war on Iraq involving nuclear weapons. A more contained conflict could cause half a million deaths and have a devastating impact on the lives, health and environment of the combatants, Iraqi civilians, and people in neighbouring countries and beyond. It could also damage the global economy and thus indirectly harm the health and well-being of millions more people across the world.

Researched and written by health professionals, this evidence-based report examines the likely impact of a new war on Iraq from a public health perspective. Credible estimates of the total possible deaths on all sides during the conflict and the following three months range from 48,000 to over 260,000. Civil war within Iraq could add another 20,000 deaths. Additional later deaths from post-war adverse health effects could reach 200,000. If nuclear weapons were used the death toll could reach 3,900,000. In all scenarios the majority of casualties will be civilians.

The aftermath of a 'conventional' war could include civil war, famine and epidemics, millions of refugees and displaced people, catastrophic effects on children's health and development, economic collapse including failure of agriculture and manufacturing, and a requirement for long-term peacekeeping. Destabilisation and possible regime change in countries neighbouring Iraq is also possible, as well as more terrorist attacks. Global economic crisis may be triggered through trade reduction and soaring oil prices, with particularly devastating consequences for developing countries.

The financial burden will be enormous on all sides, with arms spending, occupation costs, relief and reconstruction possibly exceeding $150-200bn. The US is likely to spend $50bn - $200bn on the war and $5bn - 20bn annually on the occupation. As the report points out, $100bn would fund about four years of expenditure to address the health needs of the world's poorest people.

Conflict will be more destructive than 1990-1991 Gulf War

The avowed US aim of regime change means any new conflict will be much more intense and destructive than the 1990-91 Gulf War, and will involve more deadly weapons developed in the interim. Furthermore, the mental and physical health of ordinary Iraqis is far worse than it was in 1991, making them much more vulnerable this time round, and even less able to muster the resources needed for recovery and reconstruction.

Thanks to the oil revenues and social policies of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, Iraq pre 1991 had become a reasonably prosperous, urbanised, middle-income country with a modern social infrastructure and good public services. The combined effects of war and sanctions, only partly offset by the humanitarian relief of the Oil-for-Food programme, relegated it to a pre-industrial age, and it now occupies a lowly 126th place out of 174 in the UN Human Development Index.

The likely war scenario

The report bases its estimates on data from the earlier Gulf War, from comparable conflicts and crises elsewhere, and from the most reliable recent information on the health status of Iraq. It hypothesises a credible war scenario from current US military strategy, which envisages four different elements: sustained and devastating air attacks on government and military facilities and infrastructure in Baghdad and other major urban centres; landing of ground forces to seize oil-producing regions in the south east gaining control of north Iraq; and rapid deployment forces backed by air attacks to take Baghdad.

The US goal of leadership change is counterbalanced by Saddam Hussein's goal of survival, so a short, clinical campaign is probably wishful thinking. The options open to Saddam Hussein include:

- firing oil wells and using radiological or chemical missiles to pollute the sites
- paramilitary attacks on Kuwaiti and Saudi oil fields, pipelines and facilities
- paramilitary attacks on civilian centres in other Gulf states
- paramilitary attacks on targets in the US, UK and other Coalition countries
- selective use of chemical and biological weapons (CBW).

The report considers the circumstances in which more substantial use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons may occur. An Iraqi CBW attack on Israel or elsewhere could provoke immediate nuclear retaliation from Israel, the US and/or UK, while the UK and US have not ruled out the nuclear first-strike option.

Many questions remain unanswered about the aftermath and the likelihood of installing a stable new regime. The current problems of Afghanistan provide a reminder of the huge investment required to rebuild a shattered country, and the reluctance of the global community to support such long-term development.

Alternatives to war

As an objective report by health professionals, the report does not take a political stance on the alternatives to war on Iraq. Its main goal is to aid decision-making and encourage informed public debate by spelling out the true cost of a new war, against which any potential gains from going to war must be weighed. It lists non-violent strategies that have not yet been fully explored - some relating specifically to Iraq, and some to improving the international security context. It concludes that there is an urgent need for humane and wise global leadership which recognises that national security is impossible without international security.

***Collateral Damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq** is being issued in London on 12 November 2002 by the global health organisation Medact, the UK affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War - winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. It is being released on the same day in the US by IPPNW and its US affiliate Physicians for Social Responsibility, and by other IPPNW affiliates in ten other countries.*

The report can be found on Medact's website www.medact.org and on IPPNW's website at www.ippnw.org. A longer version with additional information, references and statistics can also be viewed on the Medact website.

The Prime-Time War: Iraq

Rosalie Bertell

One evening as I was going home from work, I overheard some young people talking about the Gulf War. It was in March of 1991, and the war had started the previous January. These students were talking about going home to watch the 'prime-time war'.

The overt military build-up began after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, yet the tensions that produced it could be traced right back to the 1930s, when Great Britain, France and the United States dominated the Arabian Peninsula and its oil reserves. The major players in the trade were five American companies, Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, Texaco and Gulf, plus Royal Dutch Shell and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now BP). These were dubbed the 'Seven Sisters' and they controlled refineries, pipelines, tankers and crude oil production throughout the world.

The links between politics, oil and war have always been strong. When Iran nationalised its oil industry in 1951, the US and British governments supported a coup to overthrow the prime minister and replace him with the Shah. Iran then bought billions of dollars' worth of US weaponry and became a major regional distributor of US products. In 1972 when the Iraqi government nationalised the Iraqi petroleum Company, President Nixon began arming the Kurdish people in an attempt to destabilise the regime. Then when Iraq agreed to share the Shatt-al-Arab waterway (a vital part of trade infrastructure) with Iran in 1975, the US support for the Kurds was abruptly terminated. After the fall of the Shah in 1979 and the accession of Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini to power, the US became supportive of Iraq and did not complain when Iraq attacked Iran in 1980, beginning the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. Following these events and the terrorist seizure of the US Embassy in Teheran, the US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and most of the other Emirates provided military aid and assistance to Iraq. To complicate matters, in 1985 and 1986, the US also secretly supplied Iran with arms in what became known as the Iran-Contra scandal. When the war between Iran and Iraq ended, the propaganda against Saddam Hussein began.

During the 75 years of Western dominance in the Gulf, the US and UK had never shown great concern for democratic values, human rights, or social justice. When it suited their purpose, they supported Iraq in its violent aggression against Iran, ignoring Iraq's poor human rights record and its violent attacks on its own people. The about face of US policy in 1990 and its mobilisation of countries against Iraq was obviously based on domestic oil needs. US oil production had declined during the 1980s. Oil experts predicted that US oil imports from the Gulf, which had been 5 percent in 1973, would rise from 10 percent in 1989 to 25 percent by the year 2000. The dependency of Europe and Japan on Gulf oil was even greater.

Perhaps there was also a desire to test the newest military doctrine known as air/land battle. As a 'logistics exercise', the Gulf War has been described as the equivalent of a second Normandy invasion, funnelled into 40 days of actual combat.

During the 1980s Saudi Arabia poured almost $50 billion into creating a Gulf-wide air defense system built according to NATO specifications. By 1988, the US Army Corps of Engineers had also constructed a $14 billion network of military cantonments across Saudi Arabia. These buildings were being expanded to accommodate a large troop deployment even as the Iraqis massed on Kuwait's border ready to attack. Early in 1990, before Iraq invaded Kuwait, General Schwarzkopf informed the US Senate Armed Services Committee of the new military strategy designed to protect US access to and control over Gulf oil in case

of regional conflict. This technique, involving a kind of high-speed blitzkrieg, had been designed during the Cold War period for use against Soviet tanks pouring into central Europe. The strategy included use of depleted uranium ordnance on a large scale for the first time.

It is now a matter of record that prior to the Gulf war, the US Congress had approved agricultural loan subsidies of hundreds of millions of dollars to Iraq. This loan would benefit US farmers in that the Iraqis would buy rice, corn, wheat, and other essentials almost exclusively from the US. These loans were suddenly cut off in an economic embargo imposed by President Bush.

The imposition of sanctions on basics such as food always hits the civilian population first, and it hits them hard. The US blockade on food sales caused serious shortages in Iraq, provoking internal unrest. However, US manufacturers' sales of arms to Iraq were not cut off immediately. On 27 October 1992, the House of Representatives learned that US corporations, with government agency consent, as well as corporations in other NATO countries, had exported chemical, biological, nuclear and missile system components to Iraq as late as 1989. The amounts from the US were significant - for example, 1500 gallons of anthrax and 39 tons of biological warfare agents. The latter were produced in Boca Raton, Florida; items for scud missiles were made in Connecticut and Pittsburgh. Even more astonishing, when Iraq failed to pay for some of this military ordnance, the American taxpayer had to foot the bill. Russia, France, UK and Germany also supplied Iraq with weapons during the 1970s and 1980s in spite of the fact that Iraq was thought to have the fourth largest army in the world, posing a credible threat to its neighbours.

Arms sales make money, but they don't necessarily give the purchaser military capability. When a country sells a weapons system to another, it then can get funding from its own government to create a counter-weapon. This keeps the military machine well-oiled. The Iraqi army was large, but the military hardware sold to them by the West did not pose a threat to NATO countries as they had already developed the capability to defend themselves. They were, however, a considerable problem for the other countries surrounding Iraq and for the Kurdish minority.

The Build-up to War

Kuwait wasn't really surprised by the Iraqi invasion. Iraq had appealed to both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for release from foreign war loans, and an agreement was drawn up which would address both this issue and a longstanding border dispute. The treaty was due to be signed in Jeddah on 3 August 1990. When Jordan's King Hussein urged Kuwait to get on with this agreement, the Kuwait Foreign Minister replied: 'We are not going to respond to Iraq. If they don't like it, let them occupy our territory. We are going to bring in the Americans.'

According to the *Guardian Weekly* (13 January 1991), which obtained an Iraqi transcript of the meeting, US Ambassador April Gilespie met with Saddam Hussein on 25 July, a week before the invasion of Kuwait. The US State Department has not denied the accuracy of this document. When Saddam Hussein stated that 'Iraq could not accept death in the face of Kuwait's economic war and military action', she failed to warn him that the US would oppose an Iraqi invasion. She explained later that she had 'direct orders from the President to seek better relations with Iraq.' Four days before the invasion, the US Senate reported that the CIA were predicting the invasion to the day. Two days later, the Assistant US Secretary of State John Kelly told a Congressional hearing that the US was not committed to defending Kuwait. No action to stave off attack was taken.

The Iraqi troops not only invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, but they went all the way to the capital city and took control of the whole country.

The next move was to gain support from the surrounding Arab nations. On 3 August, President Bush sent Secretary Cheney, General Powell and General Schwarzkopf to Saudi Arabia. They told King Fahd that the US believed Saddam Hussein could attack Saudi Arabia in as little as 48 hours, thereby destroying any prospects of an Arab resolution to the problem. President Bush promptly ordered 40,000 US military personnel to Saudi Arabia, and subsequently added another 200,000, although he waited until after the November election to notify Congress. In October 1990, General Powell referred to the new military plan for waging war against Iraq that had been readied for such an emergency.

According to former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, the United States then manoeuvred the UN Security Council into an unprecedented series of resolutions against Iraq, eventually securing one, on 29 November, which authorised any nation to use 'all necessary means to enforce these resolutions.'

> The US paid multi-billions of dollars in bribes, offered arms for regional wars, threatened and carried out economic retaliation, forgave multi-billion dollar loans, offered diplomatic relations despite human rights violations, and in other ways corruptly exacted votes, creating the appearance of near universal international approval of US policies toward Iraq.

Iraq was to withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991 or face the consequences.

Propaganda is a vital past of any war, and the next question was how to win the support of the American and European people. An anonymous American organisation called 'Citizens for a Free Kuwait' hired the prestigious public relations firm Hill Knowlton to develop programmes which would generate public support for a UN attack on Iraq. According to Hill Knowlton, 'President Bush was kept informed of what was being done'. It was this firm that publicised the story, distributed worldwide, that Iraqi soldiers had thrown babies out of incubators in a brutal takeover of Kuwaiti hospitals. The story was later discredited when it was discovered that its star witness was the young daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States.

Meanwhile, the British Minister of Defence briefed journalists on what was 'non-releasable information' for Gulf War reporters: no numbers of troops, aircraft or other equipment. No names of military installations or specific location of military units. No information on future operations or security precautions. No details on the rules of engagement, or information on intelligence collection. Basically, the media was to be provided with 'safe' information through special government and military briefings.

The Reality on the Ground in Iraq

The Gulf War provided a first venture for NATO forces outside the European theatre, and it included not only the US, Britain, France and Canada, but also a rear guard of almost 150,000 troops from Turkey with the help of about a dozen Arab nations. Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain each sent a few ships and aircraft. Arranging such an alliance was considered to be a monumental foreign policy achievement for President Bush.

Operation Desert Storm

Systematic carpet bombing of Iraq began on 16 January 1991 at 6.30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (2.30 am in Baghdad) - right on time for the US prime-time news.

The Gulf War provided the first battle-testing of dozens of highly sophisticated weapons, and a fully integrated electronic battlefield. The 'accuracy' of these smart weapons was demonstrated regularly for the

evening television viewer. Pictures such as those of a laser targeting system lining up on the roof of the Iraqi Ministry Defence, and a 2000-pound laser bomb blowing the building apart gave the impression of a remote, bloodless, push-button war. Some of this 'magic' was dispelled when both the *New York Times* and *Boston Globe* attacked the 'surgical myth of the Gulf War' on 16 April 1991. Apparently only 7.4% of the bombs used were so-called 'precision guided ordnance'.

There were more than 110,000 air sorties (a rate of nearly two per minute over a period of six weeks), and more than 88,000 tons of explosives were dropped. The destruction is said to have been equivalent to seven times the force of the Hiroshima bomb. After the war, United Nations investigators described civilian damage as 'near Apocalyptic'.

The planes met very little resistance from Iraqi aircraft, and Iraq had no effective anti-aircraft or anti-missile defence. The Iraqi scud missiles, which were talked about so much, were surface-to-surface missiles designed for long-range penetration into 'enemy' country - Saudi Arabia or Israel. The main targets of the NATO bombing were electrical power generation, relay and transmission; water treatment plants, together with pumps, distribution systems and reservoirs; telephone and radio transmission, and relay facilities; food processing, storage and distribution warehouses and markets; beverage plants, including infant milk formula; animal vaccination stations; agricultural irrigation sites; railroads; bus depots; bridge, highway overpasses; public transportation vehicles; oil wells, pipelines, oil storage depots, gasoline filling stations, kerosene storage tanks; sewage treatment and disposal systems; and factories engaged in civilian production (for example, cars and textiles). It has been estimated that thousands of civilians died from dehydration, dysentery and disease caused by contaminated water and inability to receive medical assistance. Even more died from hunger, shock, cold and stress due to lack of food, sanitary living conditions, housing and the other necessities of life.

Ramsey Clark, travelling more than 2000 miles through Iraq with a camera crew on 2-8 February 1991, reported extensive damage: 'No city, town or roadside stop had any running water, electricity, telephone or adequate gasoline for transportation. His report matched those of others who went to Iraq after the war ended. Dr Ibrahim Al Moore, who was head of the Red Crescent for ten years and delivered Red Cross medicines to civilian hospitals in Iraq, estimated that by 6 February 1991, civilian deaths from the bombing were 6,000-7,000, with another 6,000 dead from contaminated water, lack of medicine, and insufficient supplies of infant formula.

It is also thought that chemical and perhaps biological warfare factories in Iraq were struck by bombs. Obviously destruction of such highly toxic facilities merely spreads this hazardous material into the surrounding environment, posing a threat to humans and animals. It was thought that Iraq had a stockpile of thousands of tons of mustard gas, a blister agent used in World War I. This gas is persistent in the environment, and in France has been reported to be burning people 70 years after it was originally used. Chemical and biological brews, indiscriminately disseminated by a bomb, could send toxic clouds over highly populated areas - including over Allied personnel.

Even more problematic was the bombing of Iraq's two nuclear research reactors some time after 17 January 1991. These two reactors were located in the southern suburbs of Baghdad. They included a Russian-supplied five-megawatt (thermal) reactor - commercial nuclear reactors are about 1000- to 3000-megawatt thermal - and an even smaller Tammuz-2, 0.5-megawatt reactor supplied by the French. Iraq had originally had three nuclear reactors. The largest, located at the Osirak Complex, was destroyed by Israel in a 'pre-emptive strike' in 1981, before its nuclear fuel was loaded. The two smaller reactors were operative and produced some heat, electricity and nuclear tracers for medical use. Reportedly, high-level radio-

active waste was also stored on site. According to the US military: 'precision bombing caused the reactors to collapse in on themselves - sealing in the nuclear fuel and fission by-products under tons of rubble.' One wonders if this story of perfect containment is more wishful thinking than fact.

Although many Americans and Europeans thought that Iraq was being attacked to prevent it developing nuclear weapons, Iraq had no such capability. These two research reactors used a total of 6 kilograms of fuel enriched to 80 percent in uranium 235, insufficient for making uranium bombs, which require a minimum of 22 kilograms of fuel enriched to at least 95 percent. It is also inappropriate for making plutonium bombs because one needs uranium 238 to generate the plutonium. We do now know that Iraq was trying to build a uranium enrichment plant, and may eventually have been able to enrich uranium itself without having to depend on Russia or France for supplies, but this would have required many more years. During 'Safeguard Inspections' in November 1990, the International Atomic Energy Agency declared that Iraq had accounted for all of its nuclear fuel. Iraq was also a signatory to and in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Operation Desert Sabre

The tank war began on 24 February, directly following the heavy carpet bombing of Iraqi positions and the most massive helicopter assault since Vietnam. US AH-64 Apache 'tank killing' helicopters directly preceded ground attacks from both east and west. The Iraqi arsenal consisted mostly of Soviet tanks, designed 20 years ago, with a main gun range about 1000 metres short of the range of Allied tank guns. Even when their range was close enough to hit a NATO Bradley tank, it had little effect, as the Bradley had a hardened depleted uranium shell to protect it.

The Iraqis did not possess DU weapons, but there were fears that they might use chemical warfare against the Allied forces. The British MoD believed that Iraq 'may have as many as 100,000 artillery shells, filled with chemicals and several tons were stored near the front line.' It was a rational fear, since it was the West who exported this ordnance to Iraq.

According to a first-hand report, 30,000 bomb-stunned and starving Iraqis surrendered in the first two days. Many of the conscripts were as young as 11, 12 and 13 years old, and they had had just six weeks of military training before being sent to war. At least 40 Iraqis tried to surrender to a CNN television crew. The Iraqis were exhausted, hungry and in a very distressed condition. Most seemed relieved to surrender.

Along what has been called the 'Highway to Hell', where Allied forces pounded the retreating Iraqi conscripts, there were more than 2,000 wrecked vehicles and 10,000 to 15,000 charred bodies. Disputes continue to rage about an attack two days after the ceasefire, and it was the subject of a 1991 investigation by the US Army's Criminal Investigation Command. The military investigators, fielding an anonymous complaint and completing a secret report, exonerated Barry R. McCaffery, commander of the Army's 24th Infantry Division, which had continued destroying Iraqi positions after the cease-fire was announced. After his exoneration, McCaffery was made a four-star general, retired, and was then appointed President Clinton's top drugs control official. The incident has been revived by an investigative reporter, Seymour M. Hersh, and questions raised about the investigation's conclusions in a long article based on some 200 interviews (including members of the 24th Infantry) in *The New Yorker* magazine.

Army engineer Dwayne Mower identified DU hits on nearly half of the thousands of buses, trucks, cars and tanks he saw on the highway. At the time, he thought that talk of radioactivity was just a rumour, so he and his comrades did not worry when a 40-ton transport truck crammed with DU rounds accidentally

blew up near their camp. Mower and most of the 651st Combat Support Attachment later began experiencing strange flu-like symptoms.

Along the highway, the effects were much, much worse. On some bodies the hair and clothes were burned off, and skin was incinerated by heat so intense that it melted the windshields of vehicles onto the dashboards. Napalm, cluster and anti-personnel fragmentation bombs were used. Bomblets, called Sadeyes, which can either explode on impact or be timed for later detonation, were carried in missiles capable of spreading deadly shrapnel over an are equal to 157 football fields.

A secret document from the offices of the Atomic Energy authority smuggled out to a *Guardian* reporter stated that the depleted uranium shells used by the Allies in the Gulf War had left 'at least 40 tons of radioactive dust on the battlefields of Kuwait and Iraq.' Maps from the Pentagon later showed most of southern Iraq and northern Kuwait covered with depleted uranium fallout. During a major fire at the Doha Base used by the US Army in Kuwait, there were six hours of severe explosions and raging fires releasing sufficient aerosols to engulf much of the battlefield. Then was a steady eight-knot wind, sending the smoke and debris to the south south-east. Estimates are that hundreds of tons of uranium were left on the battlefield, on the destroyed tanks and vehicles. Worse still, some of the contaminated shells were taken home as souvenirs. The US has stated that it had no legal obligation to deal up the battlefield, and reinforcing this position has commented: 'It does not appear that Kuwait has addressed the long-term management of hazardous and radioactive materials in captured vehicles.'

By the end of the war, the Allies had suffered damage to eleven tanks: four were struck by land mines and seven were hit by cannon fire. None of the damage was serious. There were approximately 300 Allied deaths in the war, and some were due to so-called 'friendly fire', including a rather incredible incident in which US forces shot at a British unit.

The official estimate of damage to the Iraqi side was 100,000 troops killed, 85,000 captured and 100,000 deserted, with over 300,000 wounded. The actual number of Iraqis killed has never been determined. Under the Geneva Conventions, armies are required to maintain a grave registration service and exchange 'lists' after the war:

> parties to conflict shall ensure that burial or cremation of the dead, carried out individually as far as circumstances permit, is preceded by a careful examination of the bodies with a view to confirming death, establishing identity and enabling report to be made... they shall further ensure that the dead are honorably interred, if possible according to the rite of the religion to which they belonged, that their graves are respected... properly maintained and marked so that they may always be found.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, NATO failed to provide the Red Cross with the names of the tens of thousands killed, or the locations of mass graves - in fact, the Red Cross only gained access to graves for 21 people. This has been one of the most disturbing mysteries of the Gulf War and is in direct violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. No one can estimate the number of deaths and illnesses that will result from the long-term consequences.

Aftermath of the 40-Day War

One of the first foreigners to visit Baghdad after this short war was Rich McCutcheon, coordinator of the Canadian Friends Service Committee. He travelled with a Red Crescent medical convoy, which arrived in Iraq on 24 March 1991, bringing one and a half tons of baby milk powder, one and a half tons of

intravenous fluid, and about $20,000 worth of medicines, including drugs for diabetes, asthma in children and heart disease.

McCutcheon reported that the convoy found most roads impassable. With all means of communication destroyed, water purification systems taken out, sewage systems disabled, and public transportation obstructed, the entire city of Baghdad was falling apart. Fuel, food and even doctors had been rationed. It was even worse in Karbala, a holy city 88 kilometres southwest of Baghdad. There, McCutcheon witnessed massive destruction: the top two floors of the hospital had caved in; X-ray machines and refrigerators for keeping blood cool had been destroyed. The Allied bombing had spawned internal violence and unrest. There was house-to-house fighting and looting; stores and homes were burned to the ground. In the hospital in Karbala, physicians, medical staff and patients had been expelled by anti-government forces, who used the hospital as a fortress. Patients who could walk, ran, and those who couldn't were shot. Beds were thrown into the street, and ambulances were systematically and irreparably destroyed.

In 1991, the World Health Organisation and UNICEF sent a mission to assess humanitarian needs in Iraq. The leader of the mission Under Secretary General Martti Ahtisaari of Save the Children, reported that people were using water from roadside ditches for food preparation and drinking. This was the same water in which children and animals swam, and clothes were washed. There was no fuel or electricity available to boil the water, and no water purification tablets. As summer approached and the days became hotter, children became thirstier. As they drank the polluted water, they got diarrhoea and became more dehydrated.

Sister Ann Montgomery, of the Congregation of Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who lives at the Aletheia School of Prayer in New York City, is well known for her long resistance to US nuclear war policy. In July 1991, she travelled to Baghdad: 'Children in Baghdad beg one piece of bread at each house, hoping to fill a sack. One of the seven or eight children's hospitals there lost 300 children during the bombing. They went for 40 days without food, water or electricity.

She too visited the hospital in Karbala. Four months after Rich McCutcheon's visit, there were still no sanitary supplies or drugs; very little gauze or anaesthesia for surgery; insufficient supplies of insulin, vaccines, intravenous fluids, and blood plasma. Electricity was available only intermittently. No electricity meant no laboratories, no blood banks, no medical culturing, no refrigeration, no sterilisation of equipment and no X-rays. All vaccines were destroyed because they could not be properly stored. There was no haemodialysis for kidney patients, no oral rehydration salts or baby milk formula..

Although the city of Mosul had no military targets, its church, school and poorest neighbourhoods had been bombed, block after block. Almost every family had lost at least one member. The day before Ann Montgomery arrived, four skeletons were dug out of the Syrian Catholic elementary school where a family from Baghdad had taken refuge.

Iraq became a country of famine and food riots, the population bombed into pre-industrailised civilization in 40 days. Unemployment rose to 70-90 per cent, while the cost of living rocketed. There was an increase in crime, family breakdown, and psychiatric illness. There was also a severe increase in malaria, diarrohea, gastroenteritis, meningitis, and hepatitis A. According to Ann Montgomery's article, some outbreaks of cholera and typhoid were reported. The destruction of the country's infrastructure was further compounded by the sweeping sanctions imposed by the UN after the end of the war.

In September 1991 Eric Hoskins, a Canadian physician, coordinated an international study team funded

principally by UNICEF, the MacArthur Foundation, the John Merck Fund and Oxfam-UK. The team visited Iraq's thirty largest cities and rural areas throughout the region. Separate in-depth studies on child mortality and nutrition, health facilities, electrical facilities, water and waste systems, environment and agriculture, income and economics, child psychology, and women were carried out. The team discovered that, although the war was over, the killing of the Iraqis was still going on. Child mortality rates had risen by about 380 per cent. It should be remembered that in Iraq, before the war, 45 per cent of the population was below 15 years of age, so the sanctions primarily affected children. Civilized societies cannot pursue Saddam Hussein by withholding insulin from teenage diabetics,' was Hoskins' comment. Another physician who traveled to Iraq from California was David Levinson, who reported that 'all of the parameters for severe epidemics exist in Iraq: poor sanitation, no communication, lack of food, lack of medicine, lack of transportation and a poor water supply.' It was these physicians who first pointed out the radioactive debris left on the battlefield, and that children were playing with depleted uranium bullets.

On his return to Canada, Hoskins tried to convince the Canadian government to release $2 million of Iraqi funds, which had been frozen since the war, to pay for baby milk and medicine. Other countries were holding Iraqi foreign deposits worth $4 billion. None of this was released as aid. About 1800 tons of milk purchased by Iraq was held in Turkey while the children of Iraq were dying.

Again in 1995, the world was told of the country's suffering. The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs stated: 'health officials have reported alarmingly high increases in rare and unknown diseases, primarily in children. Anencephaly, leukaemia, carcinoma and cancers of the lung and digestive system have risen dramatically as have late-term miscarriages and incidence of congenital diseases and deformities in fetuses.'

These findings were verified by UNICEF in an Associated Press and Reuters News Service release in 1997 - 'between August 1990 and August 1997, more than 1.2 million children in Iraq had died due to embargo related causes'. The embargo forced surgery without anaesthetics, antibiotics or painkillers. It prohibited medical journals. There was no camera film, and families reported not having any pictures of their children, who were now dead. Toys, bikes, pencils, erasers, and children's exercise books were also prohibited. Prior to the Gulf War, Iraq had enjoyed one of the best health-care systems in the region. Leukaemia had been cured at a rate of 76 per cent; after the war it was only 25 per cent. Even in 1999 the death rate of children and infants was still more than double that preceding the war.

The Wider Impact of the War

The fertile delta between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers is known as the 'cradle of civilisation' and the birthplace of agriculture. The first irrigation systems were developed here seven thousand years ago, and the area hosted the first 'urban settlements'. It is a region rich in archaeological treasures and holy places. Before the war, agriculture in the 'fertile crescent' employed 23 per cent of Iraq's population, and the area produced some of the world's largest date, rice, wheat, barley, fruit, vegetable, and fodder crops.

Iraq also has a fragile desert area, home to many small animals. The desert soils are held together by a living crust of micro organisms, ephemeral plants, salt, silt and sand. We know from experience how long it takes for such systems to recover from tank warfare - during World War II , desert warfare in North Africa caused a ten-fold increase in dust storms.

But for the West, the most 'valuable' of Iraq's assets was, of course its crude oil reserves. Ironically these reserves caused some of the worst environmental destruction, as oil was spilled onto the land and into the

sea, and huge oil fires filled the skies with dense toxic smoke.

Oil-soaked cormorants staggered ashore on the Saudi Arabian coast after 63 million gallons of crude oil were released in a series of spills. The Socotra cormorants breed only in the Gulf and they feed by diving for fish. They became coated with oil and this prevented them from flying. An international bird research center tried to save some of these beautiful creatures, but the washing treatment itself was traumatic, so they only attempted to wash the strongest birds.

Birds Fleeing from Gulf War

NICOSIA, Cyprus - The Gulf War is not for the birds.

Cyprus bird-watchers say that since the air war began in January, the Mediterranean island has become a haven for birds normally residing in the Persian Gulf.

'The ecological destruction of the birds' natural habitat in the Gulf Region has forced cranes, red-breasted geese, mule swans and white storks to search for a safe place,' said Pavlos Neophylou, secretary of the Cyprus Ornithological Society.

Neophylou said the Society had observed birds' migratory patterns shifting to Cyprus during Mid-East conflicts as long ago as the beginning of the Iraq-Iran War in 1980 and the civil war in Lebanon.

Associated Press, *The Gazette*, Montreal,
2 March, 1991 K10

The Persian Gulf coastline has sandy beaches, small green areas, mud flats and estuaries — habitats for a large variety of biota. Along the coast there are mangrove trees, which serve as a nursery for both shrimp and fish. Coral reefs support fish hatcheries as well as sustaining the endangered Hawksbill turtle. Other endangered species, like the Siberian crane, the Dugong (similar to the Florida manatee), and green turtles feed on the undersea grasses. Common cranes, geese, herons, pelicans and ducks all migrate through the Gulf, and porpoises are found in the straits between Qatar and Iran. The Gulf is not very deep, only about 39 metres (110 feet), and water exchange is very slow, so the crude oil quickly coated the sea bottom, destroying the breeding ground for much of this marine life.

The oil spills in the Gulf also threatened to clog water desalination plants and electrical generating plants along the coast. One of the oil slicks hit the tip of the island of Abu Ali - home to tens of thousands of migrating birds. The nearby desalination plant processed 870 million litres of fresh water a day. The first desalination plant to close due to crude oil was at Safaniya on the Saudi coast. This slick was probably caused by one of the smaller spills, possibly by US attacks on an Iraqi tanker. The Allies claimed that Iraq had caused the biggest spill, by opening the taps at the Mina al-Ahmadi terminal in occupied Kuwait. Iraq claims that bombing destroyed both its tankers and the pipelines. One wonders if it really matters which side committed these environmental crimes; in the end both were guilty of waging a war that paid little heed to the natural surroundings.

One of the most enduring images of the Gulf War was the enormous clouds of toxic smoke caused by

hundreds of burning oil fires. In *Global Environment Change*, a newsletter based in Arlington, Massachusetts, Brad Hurley estimates that as many as 1200 fires were burning, including oil wells, refineries and storage tanks, with about 1.8 million barrels going up in flames each day. Kuwait reported 'oil lakes' several kilometres across and more than a meter deep created by spilled oil. Some of these had to be deliberately torched to prevent build-up of volatile gases. In one case vehicles crossing such a pool of oil ignited the underlying gases and five people were killed.

On 6 March 1991 US scientist Carl Sagan said that the black rain and smog from burning Kuwaiti oil wells was likely to cause massive crop failures throughout the Middle East and south Asia. He theorised that the smoke would block out the sun's rays, thereby reducing temperatures over large areas of the Earth and disrupting the monsoons. These rains are produced when warm summer air on the continent rises and pulls moisture from the oceans. Other scientists disputed his theory, claiming that as the smoke dispersed over the Tibetan plateau it would be much closer to the ground. Therefore the heat it emitted in the lower atmosphere would have a warming effect, which would be greater than the high atmospheric effect of cooling. These scientists predicted an enhancement of the monsoons. According to another environmental model developed at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, the warming might cause the monsoons to arrive earlier and more forcefully than usual.

What was observed in time was a huge typhoon that struck Bangladesh on 1 May, killing more than 100,000 people. Typhoons are not uncommon in Bangladesh, but this one was accompanied by unusually severe flooding - two feet higher than had ever been previously recorded — and it was followed by exceptionally heavy rains. The speculation as to whether or not the violent storm was related to the fires has never been publicly resolved, although there may well be classified papers on this subject.

The British Meteorological Office predicted that the smoking oil fires would produce acid rain for up to 2000 kilometres downwind of Kuwait. Soviet scientists reported very high levels of acid rain in southern Russia. Satellite images showed smoke and darkened snow in Pakistan and northern India. Astronauts aboard the space shuttle Atlantis reported that they had never seen so much haze shrouding the Earth. It was especially thick over central Africa, where they could barely see the ground.

By August, a giant waterspout and fierce storms had lashed out near a Black Sea resort, killing more than 30 people and causing thousands to flee. There were heavy storms, flooding, and landslides in the mountains that backed these seaside towns. Researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences claimed that dense clouds from the Gulf War were also responsible for the disastrous floods which took place in their country. According to Zeng Qingcun, director of the Academy's Institute of Atmospheric Physics: 'The abnormal phenomena, worsened by Mount Pinatubo's eruption in the Philippines, has led to non-stop rains in the Yangtze and Hui river valleys.' In Burma, seven towns were submerged and 200,000 people left homeless.

Although Mount Pinatubo may have had some effect on China and Burma, it likely did not influence the simultaneous record heavy storms over Eastern Europe. The Philippines lie between the equator and 20 degrees north latitude, and anything emitted into the air there is primarily affected by the trade winds that circulate between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer. Eastern Europe lies between 40 and 60 degrees north latitude and is primarily affected by the prevailing westerly winds that blow towards Russia. There was severe flooding from Bavaria to Czechoslovakia, with several deaths, destruction of farmland, and bridges washed away. Rail lines throughout Austria were submerged and the Danube River reached record heights.

Within 50 kilometres of the fires, temperatures dropped by as much as 20 degrees centigrade. The massive worldwide study of the effect of the fires led many scientists to call it the 'worst man-made pollution event in history.' Dr Richard Small, an atmospheric scientist at the Pacific Sierra Research Corporation in California called it 'a tragedy for the region, but extremely important for science.' The data collected was useful for studies on acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion and other atmospheric phenomena. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in Geneva hosted the first scientific conference on the oil fires in April of 1991.

In the popular press, the fires were usually dubbed the 'Kuwait oil fires' and most were believed to have been caused by Iraq. The Iraqi forces did indeed torch oil fields as they retreated from Kuwait but Iran was said to be experiencing 'repeated black rain events' as early as 22 January 1991. Also satellite images made in mid-February by the US Landsat-5 and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Boulder, Colorado, revealed 'smoke plumes several hundred kilometres long emanating from various regions of Iraq'. Laura A. Gundel, an aerosol expert at the Lawrence Berkley Laboratory, noted that the first suspicious 'spikes' of soot were measured at the Hawaiian NOAA observatory, Mauna Loa, in early February. Both of these observations took place long before the Iraqis' withdrawal from Kuwait and suggest that some oil fires were caused by the Allied carpet bombing.

A scientist at the US Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, was asked not to deliver their computer simulation of the fires at a scientific conference in Vienna. According to William Arkin, a US national security expert, officials at the Pentagon and State Department told him privately that they were concerned that:

> such revelations will spur demands that Saddam Hussein be tried for environmental war crimes. These sources suspect that Hussein would defend himself under 'military necessity' exclusions: smoke from burning oil wells, for example, concealed Iraqi troops from Allied bombers. The officials worry that this defense might then lead to calls for stricter environmental protection provisions in the international rules of war.

On 30 January 1991, just as the Gulf War was building up momentum, the White House waived the legal requirements for assessments of the effect 'Pentagon projects' might have on the environment. This was done because of 'concern that war efforts could otherwise be hampered'. The Pentagon assured the public that 'the military had no intention of misusing and enlarging the exemption to accomplish other objectives than to test new weapons, increase production of materials, and start new activities at its military bases'.

An international treaty protecting natural ecosystems, the United Nations Convention on Environmental Modification, had been signed in 1577 after the Vietnam War. In this conflict, the military had deliberately targeted the environment as a strategy of war: more than two million acres of forest were levelled and denuded; another five million acres of land were left contaminated and unproductive because of toxic chemicals such as 'Agent Orange'. It is estimated that land sprayed with this defoliant cannot be used for at least a hundred years. During the war in Burma, the military launched a scorched-earth policy to sweep guerrillas from the beautiful teak forests. This was also done in South Africa where, in the process, herds of elephants were destroyed. The new treaty banned all such deliberate attempts to wreak ecological havoc: blowing up dams, bombing chemical or nuclear plants; releasing chemical contaminants into the air; causing earthquakes or tidal waves; burning forests or crops; or contaminating water supplies. It is said that the convention was initiated because of the outrage caused by US attempts to seed clouds in Vietnam to disrupt the weather patterns.

However, according to the international lawyer Richard Falk at Princeton University, the convention does not cover the environmental holocaust resulting from a nuclear war because the intention would be to destroy enemy capabilities, and the side effects, namely contamination of the air, water and land, are not intended. By the same token, dropping bombs on Iraq and causing oil spills and fires is also not covered. It is clear that the 1977 treaty is inadequate for today's warfare.

The War Goes On

President George Bush officially declared a ceasefire on 28 February 1991. Yet, even ten years later, NATO forces are still conducting bombing raids. In June 2000, the *Guardian* reported that this 'low intensity warfare' was escalating: an estimated 78 tonnes of weapons had been dropped on Iraq by British aircraft since December 1998, compared to 2.5 tonnes over the six previous years. The Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman, Menzies Campbell, commented:

> There is now persuasive evidence that there is an attritional campaign against Iraqi ground-based air defence systems that has gone beyond the purpose of the no-fly zones ... This represents a significant policy shift, which has never been announced or explained to parliament.

International sanctions against Iraq have not been fully lifted. Despite a UN programme in which Iraq can exchange oil for food and humanitarian aid, ordinary civilians are still suffering because the West remains highly suspicious of Saddam Hussein's intentions. The lifting of sanctions was further delayed by a botched UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) mission sent into Iraq to destroy all 'weapons of mass destruction. While they did accomplish some important positive goals, their effectiveness suffered when they were accused of harbouring spies. Apparently both British intelligence and the US CIA gained access to UNSCOM without the knowledge of its director, Richard Butler, planting listening devices in sensitive Iraqi buildings and gathering military intelligence. This meant that Saddam Hussein was reluctant to go ahead with weapons inspections.

At a packed meeting in Kensington, London, in early 2000, journalist John Pilger stated: 'According to Unicef, Iraq in 1990 had one of the healthiest and best-educated populations in the world; its child mortality rate was one of the lowest. Today, it is among the highest on earth.' It was Pilger's disturbing film, *Paying the Price: Killing the Children of Iraq*, broadcast on British television in March 2000, which has done more than anything else to galvanise the public. The Foreign Office has reportedly been shaken by the massive outcry against the sanctions.

Allied veterans of the war are still being affected by 'Gulf War syndrome', and their campaigns to gain recognition and compensation continue. Many believe there is a link between the symptoms they experience and the use of DU ordnance. In a letter to President Clinton dated 8 June 2000, Tony Hall, a member of US Congress, joined with other congressional leaders in calling for an investigation into depleted uranium's effects on human health:

> Veterans of the Gulf War are fighting health problems which are not well understood by medical professionals but which are real and affect their lives in significant ways. There are credible reports that Iraqi civilians are suffering too: cancer rates appear to be significantly higher than the worldwide average ... The suspected culprit is depleted uranium, a toxic and radioactive metal. Yet, nine years after the Gulf War ended, few efforts have been made to examine its effects on human health.

On a very human level, returning soldiers were left to deal with the trauma of what they had seen and done. One soldier, whose company had been involved in one of the 'friendly fire' incidents, described how his life simply fell apart:

> Everyone was eaten up with guilt and about 30 per cent of my company were sick. There was no leadership or counselling, we were all fighting with each other, drinking too much and getting sicker as time passed. My wife was sick and hurting so bad she was totally homebound. I was discharged out of the Army on 31 December 1991. My records, medical and personal, were lost. I had become a model soldier before and during the war, but after the war was a different matter.

United States National Gulf War Resource Center Executive Director Responds to a letter on Gulf War Syndrome in the Wall Street Journal:

Dear Editor,

There are 183,629 Gulf War veterans who have filed claims against the Department of Veterans Affairs for service-related disabilities. Of those, 136,031 were approved. More than 263,000 War veterans have sought care at the Veterans Administration. Some 9,600 have died.

These figures are from the 576,000 Gulf War conflict veterans eligible for healthcare (those serving from August 2, 1990 until July 31, 1991).

In addition, according to the Department of Defense, approximately: 100,000 US troops were exposed to low levels of chemical warfare agents, including sarin, cyclosarin, and mustard gases; 250,000 received the investigational new drug pyridostigmine bromide; 8,000 received the investigational new botulinum toxoid vaccine; 150,000 received the hotly debated anthrax vaccine; 436,000 entered into areas contaminated by 315 tons of depleted uranium radioactive toxic waste possibly laced with trace amounts of plutonium; and hundreds of thousands experienced the hell on Earth of more than 700 burning oil well fires in and near a combat zone for months.

According to the *Washington Post* today, some 1,200,000 Iraqi civilians have died since the start of the Gulf War—a war with no end in sight for civilians or soldiers.

Sincerely,
Paul Sullivan
Executive Director

REMEMBERING THE PAST; QUESTIONING THE FUTURE

We have analysed the Gulf War, which is officially justified as 'humanitarian' cause. On reflection, can we really call the suffering inflicted on the civilian populations of Iraq humane? Over the centuries, civilised societies have developed and promulgated prisoners' rights and anti-torture laws, but there are no limits as to the mistreatment of nations that fall from international grace. This designation of 'rogue nations' by

the international community is a new phenomenon, but there are some rules in international law that could apply:

1. Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited.
2. It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove, or render useless objects indispensable to the agricultural areas for the production of food stuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies, and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them for the sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse Party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive.

Russia is struggling with its own complex problems of war and governance. The International Assembly for Human Rights Protection, a Russian NGO, convened a meeting on 15 May 1996 to deal with many of the same questions raised here. The conference called for a broad analysis of the causes of the Chechen War and the suffering that resulted. They made 16 concrete proposals for national healing. I was especially touched by some of them:

- to take public control over the definition of damage caused by military operations and over compensation to those who dwell in the combat zone;
- to find possible ways for psychological rehabilitation for all people involved in the conflict;
- to establish local resource and human rights protection centres, and to prepare a Book of Memory for those who were killed;
- to suggest to the President of the Russian Federation that he make more use of Russian NGOs in settling crises in and around the Chechen Republic.

Dealing with the after-effects of war is a positive process, but these proposals also emphasise the need to look at the problems that give rise to violence. I would liken war to the eruption of 'tumours' that tell us of pre-war malignant roots. The Kosovo crisis and the Gulf War were as much results of economic manoeuvring, political expediency and failed diplomacy as they were of more apparent humanitarian concerns.

In terms of the weaponry used, wars take root in the research labs and military testing sites. Experimentation has an immediate effect that can be observed, and this can help us think about what it would be like to use such a weapon in war. Domacio Lopez of the US Rural Alliance for Military Accountability, for example, has suffered from living downwind of a US depleted-uranium testing range since the 1970s. Based on his experience, he estimates that during the first eight months of the Gulf War, 50,000 Iraqi children would have died from various diseases related to the use of depleted uranium.

It is clear that military research gives us clues as to the nature and outcome of future conflict. We will take a close look at the type of research that is currently being carried out and the observable effects of past military experimentation.

Source: Planet Earth : The Latest Weapon of War by Rosalie Bertell, 2001

Raid then aid

Nick Cater

A war with Iraq will wreak destruction on an already impoverished people. What are the ethical dilemmas and practical obstacles facing aid agencies as they prepare for the aftermath of a potential conflict asks Nick Cater .

The impending assault on Iraq leaves British aid agencies in a quandary as to how to prepare for a potential humanitarian crisis. Limited funding and inexperience in dealing with nuclear, biological or chemical warfare are some of the practical obstacles. The sheer uncertainty of how conflict might affect millions of civilians is another consideration.

The effects of a war on Iraq have been investigated. A leaked draft document from the United Nations, Likely Humanitarian Scenarios, envisages damage to all essential civilian supplies and facilities: water, sanitation, food, electricity, transport, fuel. It estimates that 500,000 people will be left injured or sick, 900,000 will be refugees, three million mothers and children will need food and two million will require help with shelter.

It suggests that the situation could be far worse than either the 1991 Gulf war or the Afghan conflict because sanctions mean 60% of Iraq's 23 million people are already impoverished and dependent on state rationing. The country is urbanised and therefore reliant on electricity supplies and transport links, which are expected to be early targets for US-UK aerial bombardment.

Not only that but British charities emphasise that the water and sanitation systems are near collapse, almost a quarter of Iraqi children are malnourished and mortality rates among the under-fives have soared to 131 per 1,000.

There has been surprise at the failure of the Department for International Development (DFID) to start a regular dialogue on the potential conflict with its usual charity partners. Unlike the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which has been holding weekly meetings with American aid agencies since November to discuss emergency response and postwar rehabilitation.

DFID says it is talking regularly to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the United Nations, and "planning for all contingences". The international development secretary, Clare Short, however, has had just one meeting with the USAID administrator, Andrew Natsios, at which Iraq was among many other topics. Her department has ignored a series of charity requests for meetings on such issues as weapons of mass destruction.

British aid agencies say a vital issue will be how to maintain neutrality, impartiality and independence when their government - and likely major funder - is a co-belligerent. Military forces may dictate the terms of any access to Iraqis in need. The Kosovo and Afghanistan experience shows that neither politicians nor soldiers are great respecters of humanitarian principles.

However, the UK will break international humanitarian law if it attacks what additional protocol 1 of the Geneva convention describes as "objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population". This is a warning from agencies within the British Overseas Aid Group (BOAG), including Christian Aid, Cafod, Action Aid, Oxfam and Save the Children.

Among the practical challenges will be simply reaching the sick, injured or hungry. Save the Children official Brendan Paddy said: "If millions are affected by conflict, we will need immediate access, but security concerns among Iraq's neighbours mean it's not clear which borders will be open for aid workers or refugees to cross." And while international staff may be evacuated from Iraq itself, local staff will be at risk.

Concerns could include competition and coordination. In recent emergencies military forces have intruded into humanitarian space with aid-style propaganda operations in food, water and healthcare. Most charities look set to base themselves initially in Jordan. But the UN will coordinate its agencies, including Unicef, UNHCR and the World Food Programme - which have stockpiled supplies across the region - from Cyprus. The main military leadership will be in Kuwait, Qatar and Oman.

Funding is a central worry, especially since agencies are determined not to divert resources away from existing emergencies in Southern Africa, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and elsewhere. At the Disasters Emergency Committee, in which UK broadcasters and leading agencies cooperate in emergency fundraising, chief executive Brendan Gormley said a possible Iraq appeal had already been discussed since, if conflict began, charities would want "clean, private money" rather than rely entirely on the government, especially if there was an attack without a further security council resolution. He warned that the government might want to discourage agencies from getting involved in the conflict, which could lead to pressure on the BBC and ITV to block a DEC appeal.

One obvious agency fear is the deliberate or accidental release of biological, nuclear or chemical weapons. British agency Merlin and the London school of hygiene and tropical medicine have just launched a report about how charities could cope if this happens, which relief staff are considering at a meeting today. But Merlin chief executive Geoff Prescott said that efforts to discuss the issue with DFID or the MoD have so far come to nothing: "We've put in calls, faxes, letters and more calls to both ministers. They seem to be taking a very long time to respond."

Source: (www.guardian.co.uk), Friday January 24, 2003
(http://society.guardian.co.uk/disasterresponse/story/0,1321,880984,00.html)
Journalist and consultant Nick Cater is a media adviser to UK online donations site Justgiving.com and international editor of the forthcoming US publication Giving Magazine.

The people of Iraq face a grim future with or without a war

Haroon Ashraf

A United Nations taskforce has estimated that if war breaks out in Iraq at least 7·4 million people will need immediate humanitarian aid but this immense caseload would only represent the people that aid workers could reach. Access to needy civilians in other governorates will either be denied or be impracticable, according a recently leaked UN report written in December, last year.

Unlike the 1991 Gulf war, "this confrontation is expected to develop beyond the preparatory, and relatively short, aerial bombardment of infrastructure, towns, and cities into a potentially large scale and protracted ground offensive, supported by aerial and conventional bombardment", said the UN report.

The consensus among the aid community is that the Iraqi population, already severely weakened by the Gulf war, 12 years of sanctions, and almost sole reliance upon Hussein's government, will need a long-term, comprehensive aid strategy.

According to a report published by the UK's Oxford Research Group (ORG) in October last year, the allies strategy will be to quickly destroy Iraq's military and administrative infrastructure, access to electricity supplies, and any civil activities that could support Iraq's defences. And then draw out Hussein's elite forces, which will be mainly concentrated in and around Baghdad, and to attack them with intense aerial bombardment and ground forces.

Other key elements of the campaign will be to secure the major oil producing regions, such as Basra in the south. Troops will also try to gain control of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, for which preparations have already begun with the repair of three major airfields in the area. Forces will also attack from Jordan, moving swiftly though the deserts in western Iraq towards major cities, such as Baghdad.

The most intense fighting will probably be around Baghdad, considering the allies declared ambition for "regime change". But the allies' experience from the 1991 Gulf war suggests that the Iraqi government may use chemical and biological weapons if its survival is threatened. Furthermore it may launch strategic strikes on neighbouring countries, said the author of the ORG report, Paul Rogers, professor of peace studies at University of Bradford, UK. In such circumstances the UK government would be prepared to use a nuclear weapon on Baghdad if allied and civilian casualty rates escalate, warned Rogers.

The destruction of command and control systems of the Iraqi military, including dual-use electrical circuits and grids "could destroy power supplies in most parts of the country" said US-based Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), in a statement published in December, 2002. "A public-health emergency created by an impaired infrastructure exacerbates the Iraqi population's vulnerability to disease and hunger, given the already degraded condition of health facilities, potable water, and limited food supply", said PHR.

The results of a needs assessment presented in the UN report supports this grim view. 60% of Iraq's population--about 16 million people--are wholly dependent on government distributed food from the UN's oil-for-food programme. During a war, existing supply lines will be either shut down or rerouted. For example, the three northern governorates, home to 3·7 million people, will need access to an alterna-

tive supply line of food because established routes from Mosul and Kirkuk in the south will be inaccessible.
Iraq has tried to grow its own food but has been crippled by a major drought in the past 3 years, noted Oxfam in a briefing paper published in December, last year. Attempts to irrigate the land have been hampered by the sanctions. The 2002 wheat harvest of 1·6 million tonnes will run out in early 2003, added Oxfam.

Currently food is distributed 21 days per month by the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to about 1 million people per day. This "begs the question of how the population's basic needs will be met when government operations and transport and storage infrastructure are disrupted or destroyed by war", said Joel Charny, vice president of policy for Refugees International in a statement published on Feb 5.

The UN agrees and said that during a war people will not be able to get to distribution centres. If war breaks out the distribution system will grind to a halt. But if military intervention begins simultaneously from the north and south, the peripheral governorates of Basrah, Maysan, Thi Qar, Muthana, Najaf, Kerbala, and Qadisiyah will be immediately affected, said the report. "Most household food reserves will not last 2 months if distribution were interrupted or suspended."

Today, Iraq's health sector has a 4-month supply of basic medicines and medical supplies. But these stocks will be inadequate during and after a war. Immediate health concerns during a war will be conflict-related injuries. But as war progresses there will be a rapid increase in diarrhoeal disease if access to potable water is denied, and if oil wells are sabotaged the contaminated air will cause a simultaneous rise in respiratory infections.

Immediate humanitarian needs if war breaks out

- *Bridging, material handling, and transport*
- *Food and necessities for 5·4 million people*
- *Health supplies for 100 000 injured people*
- *Health supplies for 1·23 million highly vulnerable people*
- *Health supplies for ongoing needs of 5·4 million people*
- *Nutrition supplies for 0·54 million people*
- *Water treatment equipment for 5·4 million people*
- *Chemicals and consumables for 5·4 million people*
- *Sanitation materials and chemicals*

(Source: http://www.casi.org.uk)

NGOs and allied aid suppliers will have to gear up for "diseases in epidemic if not pandemic proportions", said the UN report. Cholera and dysentery will thrive, as will measles, meningitis and other preventable diseases--due to low vaccination rates.

The UN's estimates for southern and central parts of Iraq suggest that, excluding elderly people and patients with chronic diseases, aid workers will be faced with a caseload of 5·2 million vulnerable people. This will include 4·2 million children younger than 5 years old, 1 million pregnant and lactating women, and 2 million internally displaced people. However, if a war begins UN teams will only have immediate access to 1·23 million people in the south.

The nutritional status of about 3 million Iraqis will be in a "dire" situation and will require sustained,

therapeutic feeding. Among the most vulnerable in this population will be patients in hospital, which have an overall capacity of 27 000 beds, 5000 patients confined to institutions, "comprising orphaned children the severely handicapped, and children in detention, and 21 000 elderly".

The infrastructure of Baghdad and the central region of Iraq will be systematically destroyed by allied bombardment and may be sabotaged by retreating government forces. The allies will focus on anything to do with oil and electricity production. The report notes that the "availability of potable water will be curtailed extensively . . . and in the worst case fuel will have to be imported".

The loss of electricity and fuel supplies will have a major impact at the household level but should not affect immediate relief efforts. However, just for the northern governorates aid workers will have the immense task of bringing in fuel supplies including 30 million litres of gasoline, 40 million L of kerosene, 30 million L of diesel, and 10 000 tonnes of cooking gas. To complicate matters, there is little storage capacity in this region and available refining capacity will be insignificant.

The destruction of electricity supplies will in turn disable water and sewage treatment centres. Currently piped water reaches 45·7% homes but 65% of the water isn't treated. The fleet of water tankers on which half the urban population depends is also falling apart as the supply of spare tyres and parts dwindle.

Casualties and deaths for all sides if war breaks out

Baghdad	
Iraqi combatant deaths	12 000-50 000
Iraqi civilian deaths	12 000-50 000
Coalition combatants deaths	1100-5000
Basra, Diyala, Kirkuk, Mosul	
Iraqi combatant deaths	1200-30 000
Iraqi civilian deaths	1200-30 000
Coalition combatants deaths	60-3000
Within 3 months of end of conventional war	
Iraqi civilians	44 000-6 000
Iraqi civilian deaths in civil war	420 000
Refugee deaths	415 000-30 000
Children under 5 excess deaths	523 500
Nuclear attack on Baghdad only	
Deaths	306 600-3 608 000
Total possible deaths on all sides during the conflict and the next 3 months, excluding civil war and nuclear attacks	48 716-261 100

Source: Collateral Damage by MedAct

Water treatment plants that have emergency electricity generators cover 70% of the urban population but only 10% of rural people. UNICEF has warned that at least 39% of people will need to be supplied with water rations but the immediate need will be to supply 4·07 million people.

The country's sanitation system is also in a sorry state of repair with 500 000 tonnes of raw sewage pumped daily into fresh water sources. Half of all sewage treatment plants do not work and of those that do 25% do not meet Iraq's environmental standards, said Oxfam in a paper published in December, 2002. The UN has noted that of the 5 million people living in Baghdad, 4 million have access to a sewerage system. If electricity supplies are disrupted NGOs are concerned that that only 10% of the sewage treatment plants serving Baghdad have emergency electricity supplies.

"It cannot be emphasised to strongly that even a 'best-case' scenario of a limited war of short duration, perhaps comparable to 1991, would have much greater impact on the Iraqi people", said MedAct, the UK affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, in a report published last year.

Aside from impact on Iraqis, MedAct noted that the Gulf war had a dramatic effect on neighbouring countries--the clean up costs for Iran, Turkey, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia were $150-200 billion. Trade reduction and soaring oil prices also had "devastating consequences in developing countries" and reduced growth in 40 of them by 1% of gross national product--reaching the UN threshold for disaster relief. MedAct warns that "if the war is likely to cause worse problems than those it sets out to solve, then it is ill-advised under any circumstances, and other options must be explored".

Source: The Lancet: Special report , Volume 361, Number 9358, 22 February 2003
http://www.thelancet.com/journal/journal.isa
Please read the special articles on Iraq at: http://www.thelancet.com/journal/vol361/iss9358/editorial_and_review

Depleted uranium

Virginia S G Murray, Michael R Bailey, Brian G Spratt

Battlefields are dangerous places. Apart from the obvious risks, modern warfare involves the possibility of exposure to many toxic substances, or substances with uncertain toxicity, under conditions where stringent procedures to minimise exposure are often not readily achievable. In the Gulf War, for example, large amounts of insecticides, rodenticides, solvents, and degreasers were used, and people were exposed to antidotes to nerve agents, multiple vaccines, and smoke from burning oil wells. There was also the possibility of exposure to a new battlefield hazard--depleted uranium.

Depleted uranium is a byproduct of the uranium enrichment process and has been used for decades in medical and industrial applications, radiation shielding, counterbalance weights in aircraft, and, more recently, in military armour and ammunition.

Because of its very high density, depleted uranium is used in kinetic energy weapons consisting of a penetrator rod of depleted uranium which, when fired at high velocity, can penetrate the heavy armour of modern battle tanks. Rounds of depleted uranium provide a military advantage over the previous generation of anti-tank rounds, and will probably be used by more and more countries. Deployment of large amounts (several hundred tonnes during the Gulf War) of a material that is both radioactive and nephrotoxic has raised concerns for soldiers exposed on the battlefield, for those who return to live in these areas, and for the environment.

Use of depleted uranium on the battlefield can result in its intake in various ways. Of particular concern is that when a depleted uranium penetrator hits a hard target, such as armour plate, it can produce a dense cloud of fine dust. This dust can be inhaled by personnel in the vicinity or downwind, and later by people working on struck vehicles or casualties contaminated with the dust.

Because of the large-scale use of uranium as a nuclear fuel, its behaviour in the body has been studied extensively. After inhalation and deposition in the lungs, some is rapidly cleared in mucus and swallowed, some is absorbed into the blood, and some remains in the lungs, possibly for years. It is slowly absorbed into the blood or cleared via the bronchial tree or to nearby lymph nodes. Radiation exposure of these lymph nodes may be similar to that of the lungs, or higher, depending on how slowly the uranium dissolves in the lungs. However, the lymph nodes are generally considered to be much less sensitive to radiation than lung tissues. Fortunately, when uranium is absorbed into the bloodstream, most of it is rapidly excreted in urine: not only does this clear it from the body, but it enables measurements of uranium in urine to be used to assess past exposures to uranium. About 10% goes to the kidneys, but is lost within weeks, and about another 10% deposits in bone, where it remains for many years, being slowly lost as the bone remodels itself.

Depleted uranium is usually described as being weakly radioactive and emits three types of ionising radiation: α particles, β particles, and photons (X-rays and γ rays). Relative exposures from each depend on whether the depleted uranium is outside or inside the body.

Exposure to γ rays from depleted uranium is only an issue near massive quantities of it, and is readily measured and controlled. The highest exposures likely to arise in practice are to the crews of vehicles carrying depleted uranium ammunition or fitted with depleted uranium armour. Radiation exposure of

American battle tank struck by "friendly fire"

the skin from direct contact with depleted uranium comes mainly from ß particles, and can be very much higher than that from γ rays. It is also of more concern because of the potential retention of spent penetrators as souvenirs, or even the fabrication of ornaments or toys from them. However, because of the low specific activity, even continuous contact (wearing a piece as jewellery) is unlikely to produce a radiation burn. Nevertheless, risk of skin cancer would probably be raised, and such exposures should be avoided. If depleted uranium enters the body, the radiation exposure is mainly from particles, which are thought to be more damaging than ß particles or α rays.

In their reviews published in 2001 and 2002, the Royal Society Working Group on the hazards of depleted uranium munitions thought that the main radiation risk from inhalation of depleted uranium dust was increased risk of lung cancer: risks of other cancers, such as leukaemia, were far lower. Moreover, the group estimated that for nearly all personnel exposed on the battlefield, radiation doses from depleted uranium would be too low to give rise to an excess of cancers that could be detected in an epidemiological study. This effect is related to the low specific activity of depleted uranium. To give enough radiation to induce an observable excess of lung cancers would involve many soldiers inhaling gram quantities of depleted uranium dust.

The critical organ for chemical toxic effects is the renal proximal tubule epithelium, but depleted uranium may also, in severe exposures, cause hepatic, haemological, respiratory, and cardiac toxic effects. Uranium could also directly damage DNA and any chemical effects might be enhanced by the effects of α particles, irradiation.

Exposures to uranium are not new, or uncommon. Many thousands of workers have been exposed to various uranium compounds over many years through processing of uranium from its ore to production of fuel elements. The health of such workers has been investigated, many of whom received higher intakes than do most soldiers on a battlefield. No clear evidence for any excess of cancers or kidney disease has been seen in these workers and their overall mortality is less than that in the general population because of a "healthy-worker effect". Despite the limitations of these studies, the absence of observed effects in uranium workers makes it unlikely that the risks of cancer or kidney disease from depleted uranium have been greatly underestimated.

Depleted uranium round discarding its casing

Reports on the health hazards of depleted uranium munitions have concluded that exposures to depleted uranium likely to occur on the battlefield will probably not lead to any measureable excesses of cancers. However, risk assessments have had to estimate intakes of depleted uranium in the battlefield using poor data for the concentrations and properties of depleted uranium oxides in aerosols released during test

firings, and using modelling procedures to predict the resulting concentrations of depleted uranium in tissues and organs, and the radiological and toxicological risks. The problem comes in trying to decide whether there are long-term effects. Without satisfactory data, and until there are better estimates of the actual intakes of depleted uranium on the battlefield, it may be prudent to remain open-minded. Measurements of depleted uranium in the urine of soldiers from the Gulf War and the Balkans are being planned and should identify any who have been exposed to substantial amounts of depleted uranium, allowing more sensitive studies of any health consequences than those that have been reported so far. These studies will need to be carefully controlled, to account for changes of renal function with age, and, for cancer risks, for confounding variables such as smoking, occupation, and other medical conditions.

Apart from the immediate consequences for soldiers on the battlefield, there are environmental concerns, since several hundred tonnes of depleted uranium may remain buried in a battlefield, possibly increasing the concentrations of uranium in local water supplies. Contamination will occur mainly from depleted uranium particles and penetrator fragments deposited on or in the soil and from intact penetrators buried in the ground. Indeed it is believed that in the Gulf and in the Balkans 70-80% of the depleted uranium penetrators remain buried in the soil. The factors affecting movement of depleted uranium in the environment include the rates of corrosion of the penetrators, soil properties, and the proximity of the penetrator to surface soils and to water sources that feed into local water supplies. Up to now, measurements in the Balkans show hotspots of contamination around penetrator impact sites, but not widespread contamination. Possible contamination of water supplies in the longer term remains a concern.

In view of their effectiveness, more and more countries will probably deploy depleted-uranium weapons. In any future conflicts, many of the hazards can be reduced with simple precautions, and arragements need to be in place to assess soldiers' exposures to depleted uranium. However, the hazards of depleted uranium to soldiers and the environment should be kept in perspective in relation to other more immediate battlefield hazards such as unexploded bombs and mines.

Virginia S G Murray, Michael R Bailey, and Brian G Spratt were all members of the Royal Society Working Group on the Hazards of Depeleted Uranium Munitions.

Chemical Incident Response Service, Guy's and St Thomas Hospital NHS Trust, London SE14 5ER, UK (V S G Murray FFOM); **Dose Assessments Department, National Radiological Protection Board, Chilton** (M R Bailey PhD); **Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Imperial College, St Mary's Hospital, London** (Prof B G Spratt PhD)

(e-mail:virginia.murray@gstt.sthames.nhs.uk)

Source: The Lancet Supplement, Vol 360/ Dec 2002/www.thelancet.com

War and humanitarian action : Iraq and the Balkans

The 1990s presented humanitarian organizations with a range of fundamentally new challenges. In the changed political environment of the post-Cold War era, not only UNHCR, but a wide spectrum of humanitarian organizations and other international actors began operating in war-torn countries and regions to a greater extent than ever before. There was a dramatic increase in intervention by multinational military forces in internal wars, and the media - particularly in the form of live television reports - played a key role in driving international responses to humanitarian crises around the world.

The mass outflow of Kurds from northern Iraq following the Gulf War in 1991 posed a particular challenge for UNHCR. Turkey refused to grant the Kurds asylum, and US-led coalition forces therefore established a 'safe haven' for them inside northern Iraq. UNHCR participated in this operation, which involved working closely with coalition military forces. It was UNHCR's first major emergency relief operation in the post-Cold War era and it proved to be a watershed for the organization.

The large-scale population movements in the Balkan region which began later the same year as Yugoslavia disintegrated, resulted in a series of even more complex international relief operations, in which UNHCR played a leading role. Again, the organization worked in close cooperation with multinational military forces in dangerous and highly politicized environments. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the first time in its history, UNHCR mounted a relief operation in the midst of an ongoing war, in an attempt to assist not only refugees, but also internally displaced people and other war-affected populations.

In the course of these and other operations during the 1990s, UNHCR faced two main challenges. First, the attempt to assist civilians in the midst of armed conflict proved vastly more difficult than assisting refugees in countries of asylum. Gaining access to vulnerable populations often proved to be a complex problem, and security was a major concern, not only for the people being assisted, but also for humanitarian personnel. To continue to be seen as impartial was hard if not impossible. Second, the large number of international actors involved in responding to humanitarian crises led to the need for improved cooperation between them. New relationships were established, not only with multinational military forces and other humanitarian organizations, but also with a range of other actors including regional security organizations, human rights organizations, war crimes investigators, development organizations, peace negotiators and the media.

This chapter describes the difficulties and dilemmas which confronted UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in these operations. For example, when should protecting people in conflict situations in their home countries be given priority over protection through asylum? What kind of relationships should humanitarian organizations establish with warring parties which are responsible for the direct targeting of civilians? How can humanitarian organizations prevent relief supplies from being diverted to local military forces, thereby fuelling and sometimes prolonging war? How can humanitarian organizations preserve their impartiality when their aims are contrary to those of one or more of the warring parties, and particularly when working in close cooperation with international military forces?

The Kurdish crisis in northern Iraq

In March 1991, after Iraqi forces had been driven out of Kuwait by the US-led Coalition Task Force, disaffected groups within Iraq launched a rebellion in both the north and the south of the country. Presi-

dent Saddam Hussein's military forces responded quickly and severely, and the consequences for Iraqi civilians were devastating. In the face of a military campaign directed against them by the Iraqi army, over 450,000 mainly Kurdish people fled to the Turkish frontier within the space of a week. Between then and mid-April, another 1.3 million Kurds fled to Iran. In addition, some 70,000 Iraqis - mostly Shiites - fled their homes in the south of Iraq. In anticipation of possible refugee outflows, UNHCR had previously pre-positioned relief goods for an estimated 35,000 people in Iran and 20,000 people in Turkey, but the scale and pace of these movements exceeded all predictions.

As the refugees poured into Iran, the Iranian government requested UNHCR assistance. According to Iranian government figures, Iran was already host to over two million refugees, including 1.4 million Afghans and 600,000 Iraqi refugees displaced during the Iran-Iraq war. With this new influx, Iran became the country with the largest refugee population in the world. UNHCR assisted the Iranian authorities to respond to the influx and to manage the refugee camps.

The relief operation in Turkey was much more complicated. The Turkish government, which itself faced a significant Kurdish insurrection in southeastern Anatolia, closed its border with Iraq to prevent the Iraqi Kurds from entering, arguing that they would destabilize the country. Several hundred thousand Kurds were therefore stranded in inhospitable, snow-covered mountain passes along the Iraqi-Turkish border.

Television crews, fresh from covering the Gulf War, captured the suffering of the Kurds exposed to extreme temperatures and the lack of food and shelter. They put further pressure on UNHCR and governments to mount an international emergency relief operation. Rarely had a humanitarian crisis received such intensive media coverage.

The relief operation on the Iraqi-Turkish border was initially dominated by the US military and other coalition forces. They played a major role in organizing and carrying out the distribution of emergency supplies. But in spite of all the available military hardware and personnel, there were serious logistical problems in distributing assistance to populations in dozens of inaccessible mountain locations.

The response of Western states to Turkey's refusal to grant asylum to the Iraqi Kurds was muted. Some diplomatic representations were made but these were neither intense nor sustained. Key states were primarily concerned about the need for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to maintain the use of air bases in Turkey, and were therefore reluctant to criticize the Turkish government for closing its border. In addition, suggestions that large refugee camps for Iraqi Kurds in Turkey would create a Palestinian-type situation tended to silence Western governments' appeals for Turkey to grant them asylum.

Establishing a 'safe haven'

As televised images of desperate Kurds trapped on the mountains continued to pour in, international pressure to find a solution mounted. At the beginning of April 1991, President Turgut Özal of Turkey broached the idea of a 'safe haven' for the Kurds inside northern Iraq. After some deliberation, on 5 April the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 688. This insisted that 'Iraq allow immediate access by international humanitarian organizations to all those in need of assistance' and authorized the Secretary - General to 'use all resources at his disposal' to address 'the critical need of the refugees and displaced Iraqi populations.' It was on the basis of this resolution and in the context of the aftermath of the wider Gulf crisis that the US-led joint task force justified the launch of Operation Provide Comfort to establish a 'security zone' in northern Iraq.

continued on page 32

a new Gulf War: the real

War on Iraq could have a devasta
and health of combatants, Iraqi c
neighbouring countries, on the en
on the rest of the world.

CASUALTIES

- Possible deaths on all sides during a 'conventional' conflict and the following three months range from 48,000 - 261,000
- If civil war breaks out within Iraq and nuclear attacks are launched, the range is 375,000 to 3,900,000
- Deaths from other indirect and longer-term adverse health effects of the war in Iraq and beyond could total an additional 200,000

THE WEAPONS

- War, sanctions and UN weapons inspections have reversed and retarded but probably not eliminated Iraq's chemical, biological and long-range missile capacities.
- The US has developed and stockpiled many new weapons of all kinds, such as earth-penetrating nuclear missiles known as 'bunker busters'

THE ENVIRONMENT

- Widespread damage to the environment of Iraq and possibly neighbouring countries
- Oil wells fired, creating oil spills and toxic smoke
- Troop movements and landmines destroy fragile desert ecology
- Bombardment destroys cities and topsoil
- Chemical, biological and possibly radiological pollution of land, sea, rivers and atmosphere

GLOBAL IMPACT

- Refugees escaping the conflict die in l
  numbers and put strain on neighbourin
  countries; emergency relief costs billio
- Destabilisation of other Middle Eastern
  countries including domestic unrest,
  repression
- Likely increase in acts of terrorism
- Possible US and world recession, with
  greatest impact felt by poorer countrie
  prices up, trade down, markets unpred
- The cascade effect: from the effect on
  individual combatant to the effect an i
  on one combatant has on other comba
  to their families, to their community, to
  in general and then to the state and

This chart is reprinted from the report: Collateral Damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq

Chart adapted with permission from one on pp 18-19 of the New Internationalist, No. 236/October 1992

cost

mpact on the lives
ıns and people in
nment of Iraq and

EY

A COUNTRY IN RUINS

- Iraq's infrastructure, already seriously damaged by the earlier war, will suffer enormous damage in initial air attacks and subsequent urban conflict
- The destruction of roads, railways, homes, hospitals, factories and sewage plants will create conditions in which the environment is degraded and disease flourishes
- Shortages of water, food, and energy resources lead to epidemic diseases that may result in more deaths than those caused directly by the conflict

HEALTH OF IRAQIS

- Humanitarian catastrophe engulfs already weakened and unhealthy Iraqi civilians - refugees, displaced persons, war-wounded, vulnerable groups especially young children
- People suffering from the immediate impact of war are more susceptible to further health hazards and less able to mobilise their own resources for survival and reconstruction
- Physical health effects include disability, infectious diseases, stillbirths, underweight new-borns, diseases of malnutrition, possibly more cancers
- Mental health effects include post-traumatic stress disorder, long-term psychiatric illness, behaviourial disturbance
- Health services, already running well below capacity, cannot cope with immediate demand or offer longer-term rehabilitation or preventive health care

FINANCIAL BURDENS

- All sides will pay a heavy financial cost, including arms spending, cost of subsequent occupation of Iraq, relief and reconstruction, possibly exceeding $ 150-200bn
- The US is likely to spend $50-20bn on the war and $5-20bn annually on the occupation
- Total economic collapse in Iraq
- A projected war cost of $ 100bn would fund about four years of health expenditure to address the health needs of the world's poorest people

continued from page 29

On 10 April, members of the task force declared a no-fly zone in northern Iraq, and assumed the leadership of the relief effort. On 16 April, US President George Bush announced that coalition forces would move into northern Iraq to establish camps for the Kurds. Although President Bush promised to 'protect' the Kurds, the US administration was wary of recommitting its troops to a hostile environment and was careful to place time limits on the US military role. The aim was to enable a quick return of the Kurds to northern Iraq and then to turn the operation over to the United Nations.

The motives of Western states in launching Operation Provide Comfort clearly went beyond immediate humanitarian concerns, and included a wish to accommodate Turkey, an important ally. Their strategy had the advantage of providing a short-term solution for the Iraqi Kurds, which improved their security, while at the same time avoiding any suggestion that this might lead to full independence. This was a solution that NATO countries were to apply again, with some variations, in Kosovo at the end of the decade.

The Iraqi government also wanted the United Nations to take over the operation rapidly from the coalition forces. The result was that on 18 April the Iraqi government and the United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting out terms for humanitarian operation aimed at enabling the displaced to return. Former High Commissioner Sadruddin Aga Khan, who was at that time the UN Secretary-General's Executive Delegate for the crisis, played a key role in these discussions with the Iraqi government.

Within the United Nations, it was suggested that UNHCR should lead the humanitarian operation. There was initially some resistance to this from UNHCR, however, as it was argued that the establishment of a safe haven would essentially be a substitute for asylum. The presence of UNHCR inside Iraq could potentially be used by neighbouring countries as pretext for denying asylum to refugees, which would set a dangerous precedent. UNHCR was also concerned about the safety of Kurds returning to northern Iraq. The Iraqi government had not provided any guarantees for their security. It had agreed to allow a 500-strong UN guard contingent to operate in conjunction with the humanitarian operation, but many in UNHCR doubted that this would be sufficient to ensure the safety of the returning Kurds. It had been agreed that the guards would be mandated and equipped to protect the staff, equipment and supplies of an inter-agency humanitarian programme in Iraq, but not the Kurds themselves.

The action of US, British, French and other forces to establish the security zone was swift and decisive. It was also of limited scope and duration, which in itself generated some tension. The military commanders wanted to hand over the relief operation to UNHCR quickly. They argued that once a humanitarian presence was established in northern Iraq, with UN guards to protect humanitarian personnel, the security issue would be resolved. UNHCR, however, was hesitant about establishing a relief operation in northern Iraq in a situation where the security of the returning Iraqi Kurdish population could not be guaranteed. UNHCR therefore argued for a more gradual transition.

Return and reconstruction

To encourage return, the coalition forces presented the concept of the UN guards to the Kurds as a genuine safeguard, and distributed hundreds of thousands of leaflets announcing that it was safe to go back. Following this, the desperate Kurds, blocked in the cold mountain passes on the Turkish border, soon started to return.

As they began moving *en masse* back into Iraq, UNHCR's immediate dilemma was resolved. As one official of the organization put it, 'UNHCR had an obligation to follow the returnees.' Having received a request from the Secretary - General to assist displaced people in all parts of Iraq, the organization agreed to

take the lead role. On 6 May 1991, High Commissioner Ogata advised her staff that 'UNHCR should assume overall responsibility for protection and assistance on the border and for voluntary repatriation from the border area.'

In the first two weeks, nearly 200,000 refugees returned to Iraq. During this time, the relief operation continued to be dominated by the US military and other coalition forces. At its height, the operation involved some 200 aircraft and more than 20,000 military personnel. Emergency relief was also provided by over 50 international humanitarian organizations and some 30 governments.

Never before had humanitarian organizations worked together with the military in such a concerted manner. The large number of humanitarian organizations and military contingents involved, and their lack of experience in working together, created serious problems of coordination. But important lessons were learned, opening up new channels of communication between the military and humanitarian organization.

The United States maintained 5,000 troops in Turkey and coalition aircraft continued to patrol the no-fly zone over northern Iraq. Yet UNHCR remained concerned about the safety of the Kurds. In a letter to the UN Secretary - General on 17 May 1991, High Commissioner Ogata expressed her 'continued concern' for the security of the returnees. She explained that 'nothing short of a negotiated settlement' accompanied by 'international guarantees' could offer a lasting solution to the plight of the Kurds.

In early June 1991, the last of the mountain camps on the Turkish border were closed. By this time, some 600,000 of the refugees who had fled to Iran three months before had also returned. In a race against the oncoming winter, UNHCR initiated a massive shelter programme. Between August and November, some 1,600 trucks crossed the border from Turkey to Iraq to deliver around 30,000 tones of construction material to 500,000 people. Most of this consisted of roof beams and corrugated iron, which Kurds used to carry out reconstruction work on their houses, schools, clinics and other infrastructure in more than 1,500 villages. These were among thousands of villages which had been destroyed by the Iraqi government.

In June 1992, once the initial emergency phase was over and as the focus shifted to longer-term reconstruction work, UNHCR handed over control of the relief operation to other UN agencies. Subsequent assessments of the poorly coordinated response of the international humanitarian community during the initial emergency phase of the Kurdish crisis led governments and humanitarian organizations alike to call for improved coordination amongst the different humanitarian organizations, and between these organizations and the military. An important role was envisaged for the new UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), which was set up to coordinate UN responses to humanitarian emergencies on the basis of General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991.At the beginning of 1998, DHA became the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The establishment of the safe haven in northern Iraq has often been regarded as a success, particularly since it allowed the return of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurds to their homes. Initially, however, economic conditions in the zone were hard. It suffered from a double economic embargo - UN sanctions against Iraq as a whole, and an internal embargo imposed by the Iraqi government. In the following years, security problems continued in the zone, both as a result of power struggles between the rival Kurdish factions and because of military incursions from outside. There was violence in 1996, for instance, when Iraqi government forces briefly surrounded the city of Irbil. The zone also experienced incursions by Iranian military forces and, on a far larger scale, Turkish military forces, which on a number of occasions attacked places suspected of harbouring members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). In a major attack in March 1995, Turkey sent 35,000 troops into the zone. In spite of these problems, rehabilitation and reconstruc-

tion work continued throughout the decade, and economic and security conditions in northern Iraq gradually improved.

The safe haven in northern Iraq in 1991 was initially hailed by some as reflecting a 'new world order'. Under this new order, intervention by a united international community would ensure that the protection of people from gross violations of human rights would take precedence over the principle of sovereignty. However, subsequent use of the safe haven concept and other attempts at protecting and assisting civilians in situations of ongoing armed conflict , in places such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, Rwanda and Kosovo, were to lead to sober reassessments.

Internally displaced persons

International concern for the plight of internally displaced persons gained new urgency during the 1990s. This was partly because of the scale of displacement caused by new internal armed conflicts during the decade, and partly because of the greater scope for involvement in areas of ongoing conflict in the changed political environment of the post-Cold War era.

When the international legal and institutional regime to protect refugees was set up 50 years ago, it did not include internally displaced persons. In keeping with traditional notions of sovereignty, internally displaced persons were seen as falling under the domestic jurisdiction of the state concerned. The result is that the response of the international community to the problem of internal displacement has been inconsistent, and large numbers of internally displaced persons have remained with out effective protection or assistance.

The extent of internal displacement

For many years, the issue of internal displacement did not feature prominently on the international agenda, although the International Committee of the Red Cross had traditionally assisted internally displaced persons in the course of protecting victims of armed conflict in the 1990s, the number of internally displaced persons increased dramatically. Although precise figures are difficult to ascertain, in 1999 it was estimated that there were some 20 to 25 million internally displaced persons-forced from their homes by conflict and human rights violations- in at least 40 countries [see Figure].

More than half of the world's internally displaced are in Africa. In Sudan alone, the long-running civil war has uprooted four million people, while equally brutal and sometimes genocidal conflicts have displaced large numbers of people within Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. In Asia, there are some five million internally displaced persons, in particular in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Iraq, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Armed conflicts in Europe, such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Georgia, the Russian Federation and Turkey, have displaced another five million people. In the Americas, some two million people are internally displaced, the majority of whom are in Colombia.

In July 1992, Francis Deng was appointed as the Representative of the UN Secretary - General on Internally Displaced Persons. In Deng's view, internally displaced persons easily fall into a vacuum of responsibility within the state. The authorities concerned see them as 'the enemy', rather than as 'the people' who require protection and assistance. Gaining access to the displaced in such circumstances is often fraught with danger. Each side fears that humanitarian aid will fortify the other and thereby seeks to obstruct assistance to the other side. Assistance may even be used as a weapon in the struggle. Access is further complicated by the fact that internally displaced people do not always congregate in easily reachable camps or settlements, but sometimes disperse to avoid identification. Many merge into urban slums where gain-

ing access may require programmes that extend to the entire community; or they may be mixed in with other war-affected populations. Even the task of assessing their numbers is thus more contentious than with refugees.

Since the internally displaced sometimes seem indistinguishable from others in need around them, the question often arises as to whether they should be identified as a special category or subsumed under the broad rubric of vulnerable people. Internally displaced people often have particular needs resulting from their displacement. They may have limited or no access to land, no stable employment prospects, and inadequate documentation, and they may remain vulnerable to acts of violence such as forcible relocation, forced conscription and sexual assault. During return and reintegration, those who have been displaced internally may also have distinct protection needs.

Internal displacement disrupts not only the lives of the individuals and families concerned but whole communities and societies. Both the areas left behind and the areas to which the displaced flee can suffer extensive damage. Socioeconomic systems and community structures can break down and impede reconstruction and development for decades. Conflict and displacement also spill over borders into neighbouring countries, upsetting regional stability. That is why Secretary - General Kofi Annan has underscored the compelling need for the international community to strengthen its support for national efforts to assist and protect all displaced populations.

The Guiding Principles

In 1998, Francis Deng presented the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to the UN Commission on Human Rights. These identify the specific needs of internally displaced persons together with the obligations of governments, insurgent groups, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) towards these populations. Based on international human rights law, humanitarian law and analogous refugee law, the Guiding Principles, which UNHCR and a number of the humanitarian organizations helped draft, gather into one document the various provisions of existing international law applicable to internally displaced persons.

The Guiding Principles address grey areas and perceived 'gaps' in the law by making explicit many of the provisions which were previously only implicit. For example, they emphasize that internally displaced persons may not be forcibly returned to conditions of danger, they set out special protection measures for women and children, and provide that displaced persons are entitled to compensation or reparation for lost property and possessions. They also assert a right not to be displaced, specify the grounds and conditions under which displacement is unlawful, and set out minimum guarantees to be upheld when displacement does occur. Although not a binding legal document as such, the Guiding Principles have gained considerable recognition and standing in a relatively short time, and are widely disseminated and promoted by the United Nations, regional bodies and NGOs.

Coordination of international action

During the 1990s, humanitarian organizations, human rights organizations and development agencies have focused increasingly on the problem of internal displacement. Attempts by the international community to address problems of internal displacement have, however, repeatedly been constrained by issues of national sovereignty, and by security problems and lack of access. They have also been constrained by definitional problems and difficulties of identifying displaced persons in need of protection and assistance.

In spite of the increased awareness of the problem of internal displacement, the international response has remained selective, uneven, and in many cases inadequate. Within the United Nations, moves to remedy

this situation have focused on strengthening cooperation amongst the various agencies involved with the displaced, as set out in the Secretary-General's 1997 UN reform programme. In their book *Masses In Flight*, Francis Deng and Roberta Cohen call for more effective divisions of labour in the field to address the needs of internally displaced persons, so that the response is more targeted.They argue that greater attention should be paid to protecting the physical safety and human rights of the internally displaced.

UNHCR's role

UNHCR was set up in 1950 to protect and assist refugees who had crossed international borders in search of safety. Although the organization's involvement with the internally displaced goes back to the 1960s, during the 1990s the scale and scope of its activities on behalf of the internally displaced increased dramatically. By 1999, UNHCR was providing protection and assistance to some five million internally displaced persons, covering a range of operations from Colombia to Kosovo and the Caucasus.

While UNHCR 's Statute makes no reference to internally displaced persons, it recognizes in Article 9 that the High Commissioner may, in addition to the work with refugees, 'engage in such activities... as the General Assembly may determine, within the limits of the resources placed at his [or her] disposal.' Based on his Article, and over a period of several decades, a series of UN General Assembly resolutions has acknowledged UNHCR's particular humanitarian expertise and encouraged its involvement in situations of internal displacement. In particular, UN General Assembly Resolution 48/116 (1993) set out important criteria to guide UNHCR's decision on when to become involved in protecting and assisting internally displaced persons. These resolutions, together with Article 9 of the Statute, provide the legal basis for UNHCR's interest in and action on behalf of internally displaced persons.

UNHCR considers it has particular responsibilities when the links between refugee problems and internal displacement are strong, and when problems relating to the protection of internally displaced persons require the organization's special expertise. In some situations it is difficult to draw a meaningful distinction between the internally displaced, refugees, returnees and other vulnerable war affected people in the same area. In such cases, it is often necessary to adopt a broad, comprehensive approach towards all those affected in the community.

An important consideration for UNHCR, when becoming involved with internally displaced persons, is the impact this involvement may have on refugee protection and the institution of asylum. There can be both positive and negative consequence of UNHCR's involvement. Countries of asylum may be more inclined to maintain their asylum policies if something is done to alleviate the suffering of the internally displaced, to reduce their compulsion to seek asylum, and to create conditions conducive to their return. On the other hand, UNHCR's activities for the internally displaced may be misinterpreted as obviating the need for international protection and asylum. Critics have also argued that a blurring of the distinction between refugees, who enjoy additional rights under international refugee law, and internally displaced persons will undermine the protection of refugees themselves.

Largest FigureIDP populations, 1999

Country	*Millions*	*Country*	*Millions*	*Country*	*Millions*
Sudan	4.0	Bosnia & Herzegovina	0.8	Yugoslavia, FR	0.6
Angola	1.5-2.0	Burundi	0.8	Azerbaijan	0.6
Colombia	1.8	Congo, Dem. Rep. Of	0.8	Sri Lanka	0.6
Myanmar	0.5-1.0	Russian Federation	0.8	India	0.5
Turkey	0.5-1.0	Afghanistan	0.5-0.8	Congo, Rep. Of	0.5
Iraq	0.9	Rwanda	0.6	Sierra Leone	0.5

Source: US Committee for Refugees, World Refugee Survey 2000, Washington DC, 2000.

*Source: **The State of the World's Refugees - 2000 - Fifty years of Humanitarian Action**, Oxford University Press. 2002.*

Rogue States

Noam Chomsky

The concept of "rogue state" plays a preeminent role today in policy planning and analysis. The April 1998 Iraq crisis is only one of the most recent examples. Washington and London have declared Iraq a "rogue state," a threat to its neighbors and to the entire world, an "outlaw nation" led by a reincarnation of Hitler who must be contained by the guardians of world order, the United States and its "junior partner," to adopt the term ruefully employed by the British foreign office half a century ago.[1]

The concept merits a close look. But first, let's consider its application in the current crisis.

The Iraq Crisis

The most interesting feature of the debate over the Iraq crisis is that it never took place. True, many words flowed, and there was dispute about how to proceed. But discussion kept within rigid bounds that excluded the obvious answer: the US and UK should act in accord with their laws and treaty obligations.

The relevant legal framework is formulated in the Charter of the United Nations, a "solemn treaty" recognized as the foundation of international law and world order, and under the US Constitution, "the supreme law of the land."

The Charter states that "the Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42," which detail the preferred "measures not involving the use of armed force" and permit the Security Council to take further action if it finds such measures inadequate. The only exception is Article 51, which permits the "right of individual or collective self-defense" against "armed attack ... until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security." Apart from these exceptions, member states "shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force."

There are legitimate ways to react to the many threats to world peace. If Iraq's neighbors feel threatened, they can approach the Security Council to authorize appropriate measures to respond to the threat. If the US and Britain feel threatened, they can do the same. But no state has the authority to make its own determinations on these matters and to act as it chooses; the US and UK would have no such authority even if their own hands were clean - hardly the case.

Outlaw states do not accept these conditions: Saddam's Iraq, for example, or the United States. The US position was forthrightly articulated by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, then UN ambassador, when she informed the Security Council during an earlier US confrontation with Iraq that the US will act "multilaterally when we can, and unilaterally as we must," because "we recognize this area as vital to US national interests" and therefore accept no external constraints. Albright reiterated that stand when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan undertook his February 1998 diplomatic mission: "We wish him well," she stated, "and when he comes back we will see what he has brought and how it fits with our national interest," which will determine how we respond. When Annan announced that an agreement had been reached, Albright repeated the doctrine: "It is possible that he will come with something we don't like, in which case we will pursue our national interest." President Clinton announced that if Iraq failed the test of conformity (as determined by Washington), "everyone would understand that then the United States and hopefully all of our allies would have the unilateral right to respond at a time, place, and manner of our

own choosing," in the manner of other violent and lawless states.[2]

The Security Council unanimously endorsed Annan's agreement, rejecting US/UK demands that it authorize their use of force in the event of non-compliance. The resolution warned of "severest consequences," but with no further specification. In the crucial final paragraph, the Council "DECIDES, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter, to remain actively seized of the matter, in order to ensure implementation of this resolution and to ensure peace and security in the area" - the Council, no one else; in accordance with the Charter.

The facts were clear and unambiguous. Headlines read: "An Automatic Strike Isn't Endorsed" *(Wall Street Journal)*, "UN Rebuffs US on Threat to Iraq If It Breaks Pact" *(New York Times)*, etc. Britain's UN ambassador "privately assured his colleagues on the Council that the resolution does not grant the United States and Britain an 'automatic trigger' to launch strikes against Iraq if it impedes" U.N. searches for chemical weapons. "It has to be the Security Council who determines when to use armed force," the ambassador of Costa Rica declared, expressing the position of the Security Council.

Washington's reaction was different. US Ambassador Bill Richardson asserted that the agreement "did not preclude the unilateral use of force" and that the US retains its legal right to attack Baghdad at will. State Department spokesperson James Rubin dismissed the wording of the resolution as "not as relevant as the kind of private discussions that we've had." "I am not saying that we don't care about that resolution," but "we've made clear that we don't see the need to return to the Security Council if there is a violation of the agreement." The president stated that the resolution "provides authority to act" if the US is dissatisfied with Iraqi compliance; his press secretary made clear that that means military action. "US Insists It Retains Right to Punish Iraq," the *New York Times* headline read, accurately. The US has the unilateral right to use force at will. Period.

Some felt that even this stand strayed too close to our solemn obligations under international and domestic law. Senate majority leader Trent Lott denounced the administration for having "subcontracted" its foreign policy "to others" - to the UN Security Council. Senator John McCain warned that "the United States may be subordinating its power to the United Nations," an obligation only for law-abiding states. Senator John Kerry added that it would be "legitimate" for the US to invade Iraq outright if Saddam "remains obdurate and in violation of the United Nations resolutions, and in a position of threat to the world community," whether the Security Council so determines or not. Such unilateral US action would be "within the framework of international law," as Kerry conceives it. A liberal dove who reached national prominence as an opponent of the Vietnam War, Kerry explained that his current stand was consistent with his earlier views. Vietnam taught him that force should be used only if the objective is "achievable and it meets the needs of your country," Saddam's invasion of Kuwait was therefore wrong for only one reason: it was not "achievable," as matters tuned out.[3]

At the liberal-dovish end of the spectrum, Annan's agreement was welcomed, but within the narrow framework that barred the central issues. In a typical reaction, *the Boston Globe* stated that had Saddam not backed down, "the United States would not only have been justified in attacking Iraq - it would have been irresponsible not to," with no further questions asked. The editors also called for "a universal consensus of opprobrium" against "weapons of mass destruction" as "the best chance the world has of keeping perverted science from inflicting hitherto unimagined harm." A sensible proposal; one can think of easy ways to start, without the threat of force, but these are not what are intended.

Political analyst William Pfaff deplored Washington's unwillingness to consult "theological or philosophical opinion" (the views of Thomas Aquinas and Renaissance theologian Francisco Suarez), as "a part of the analytical community" in the US and UK had done "during the 1950s and 1960s", but not the foundations of contempo-

rary international and domestic law, which are clear and explicit, though irrelevant to the intellectual culture. Another liberal analyst urged the US to face the fact that if its incomparable power "is really being exercised for mankind's sake, mankind demands some say in its use," which would not be permitted by "the Constitution, the Congress, nor television's Sunday pundits"; "the other nations of the world have not assigned Washington the right to decide when, where, and how their interests should be served" (Ronald Steel).

The Constitution does happen to provide such mechanisms, namely, by declaring valid treaties "the supreme law of the land," particularly the most fundamental of them, the UN Charter. It further authorizes Congress to "define and punish ... offenses against the law of nation," undergirded by the Charter in the contemporary era. It is, furthermore, a bit of an understatement to say that other nations "have not assigned Washington the right"; they have forcefully denied it that right, following the (at least rhetorical) lead of Washington, which largely crafted the Charter.[4]

Reference to Iraq's violation of UN resolutions, was regularly taken to imply that the two warrior states have the right to use force unilaterally, taking the role of "world policemen"- an insult to the police, who in principle are supposed to enforce the law, not tear it to shreds. There was criticism of Washington's "arrogance of power" and the like - not quite the proper terms for a self-designated violent outlaw state.

One might contrive a tortured legal argument to support US/UK claims, though no one has really tried. Step One would be that Iraq has violated UN Resolution 687 of April 3, 1991, which declares a cease-fire "upon official notification by Iraq" that it accepts the provisions that are spelled out (destruction of weapons, inspection, etc.). This is probably the longest and most detailed Security Council resolution on record, but it mentions no enforcement mechanism. Step Two of the argument, then, would be that Iraq's non-compliance "reinvokes" Resolution 678.[5] That resolution authorizes member states " to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660, which calls on Iraq to withdraw at once from Kuwait and for Iraq and Kuwait " to begin immediately intensive negotiations for the resolution of their difference," recommending the framework of the Arab League. Resolution 678 also invokes "all subsequent relevant resolutions"(listing them: 662, 664); these are "relevant" in that they refer to the occupation of Kuwait and Iraqi actions relating to it. Reinvoking 678 thus leaves matters as they were: with no authorization to use force to implement the later Resolution 687, which brings up completely different issues, authorizing nothing beyond sanctions.

There is no need to debate the matter. The US and UK could readily have settled all doubts by calling on the Security Council to authorize their "threat and use of force", as required by the Charter. Britain did take some steps in that direction, but abandoned them when it became obvious, at once, that the Security Council would not go along. Blair's initiative, quickly withdrawn, was a "mistake" because it "weakened the Anglo-American position," a *Financial Times* editorial concluded.[7] But these considerations have little relevance in a world dominated by rogue states that reject the rule of law.

Suppose that the Security Council were to authorize the use of force to punish Iraq for violating the cease-fire resolution (UN 687). That authorization would apply to *all* states: for example, to Iran, which would therefore be entitled to invade southern Iraq to sponsor a rebellion. Iran is a neighbor and the victim of US-backed Iraqi aggression and chemical warfare, and could claim, not implausibly, that its invasion would have some local support; the US and UK can make no such claim. Such Iranian actions, if imaginable, would never be tolerated, but would be far less outrageous than the plans of the self-appointed enforcers. It is hard to imagine such elementary observations entering public discussion in the US and UK.

Open Contempt

Contempt for the rule of law is deeply rooted in US practice and intellectual culture. Recall, for example, the reaction to the judgement of the World Court in 1986 condemning the US for "unlawful use of force" against Nicaragua, demanding that it desist and pay extensive reparations, and declaring all US aid to the contras, whatever its character, to be "military aid," not "humanitarian aid." The Court was denounced on all sides for having discredited itself. The terms of the judgement were not considered fit to print, and were ignored.

The Democrat-controlled Congress immediately authorized new funds to step up the unlawful use of force. Washington vetoed a Security Council resolution calling on all states to respect international law - not mentioning anyone, though the intent was clear. When the General Assembly passed a similar resolution, the US voted against it, joined only by Israel and EI Salvador, effectively voting it; the following year, only the automatic Israeli vote could be garnered. Little of this, let alone what it signifies, received mention in the media or journals of opinion.

Secretary of State George Shultz meanwhile explained that "negotiations are a euphemism for capitulation if the shadow of power is not cast across the bargaining table."[8] He condemned those who advocate "utopian, legalistic means like outside mediation, the United Nations, and the World Court, while ignoring the power element of the equation" - sentiments not without precedent in modern history.[9]

The open contempt for Article 51 is particularly revealing. It was demonstrated with remarkable clarity immediately after the 1954 Geneva accords on a peaceful settlement for Indo china, regarded as a "disaster" by Washington, which moved at once to undermine them. The National Security Council secretly decreed that even in the case of "local Communist subversion or rebellion *not constituting armed attack,*" the US would consider the use of military force, including an attack on China if it is "determined to be the source" of the "subversion."[10] The wording, repeated verbatim annually in planning documents, was chosen so as to make explicit the US right to violate Article 51. The same document called for remilitarizing Japan, converting Thailand into "the focal point of US covert and psychological operations in Southeast Asia," undertaking "covert operations on a large and effective scale" throughout Indo china, and in general, acting forcefully to undermine the accords and the UN Charter. This critically important document was grossly falsified by the Pentagon Papers historians, and has largely disappeared from history.

The US proceeded to define "aggression" to include "political warfare, or subversion" (by someone else, that is) - what Adlai Stevenson called "internal aggression" while defending JFK's escalation to a full-scale attack against South Vietnam. When the US bombed Libyan cities in 1986, the official justification was "self-defense against future attack." *New York Times* legal specialist Anthony Lewis praised the administration for relying "on a legal argument that violence [in this case] is justified as an act of self-defense" under this creative interpretation of Article 51 of the Charter, which would have embarrassed a literate high school student. The US invasion of Panama was defended in the Security Council by Ambassador Thomas Pickering by appeal to Article 51, which, he declared, "provides for the use of armed force to defend a country, to defend our interests and our people," and entitles the US to invade Panama to prevent its "territory from being used as a base for smuggling drugs into the United States." Educated opinion nodded sagely in assent.

In June 1993, Clinton ordered a missile attack on Iraq, killing civilians and greatly cheering the president, congressional doves, and the press, who found the attack "appropriate, reasonable, and necessary." Commentators were particularly impressed by Ambassador Albright's appeal to Article 51. The bombing, she

explained, was in "self-defense against armed attack" - namely, an alleged attempt to assassinate former president Bush two months earlier, an appeal that would have scarcely risen to the level of absurdity even if the US had been able to demonstrate Iraqi involvement; "administration officials, speaking anonymously," informed the press "that the judgement of Iraq's guilt was based on circumstantial evidence and analysis rather than ironclad intelligence," the *New York Times* reported, dismissing the matter. The press assured elite opinion that the circumstances "plainly fit" Article 51 (*Washington Post*). "Any president has a duty to use military force to protect the nation's interests" (*New York Times*, while expressing some skepticism about the case in hand.) "Diplomatically, this was the proper rationale to invoke," and "Clinton's reference to the UN Charter conveyed an American desire to respect international law" (*Boston Globe*). Article 51 "permits states to respond militarily if they are threatened by a hostile power" (*Christian Science Monitor*). Article 51 entitles a state to use force "in self-defense against threats to one's nationals," British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd instructed Parliament, supporting Clinton's "justified and proportionate exercise of the right of self-defense." There would be a "dangerous state of paralysis" in the world, Hurd continued, if the US were required to gain Security Council approval before launching missiles against an enemy that might - or might not - have ordered a failed attempt to kill an ex-president two months earlier.[11]

The record lends considerable support to the concern widely voiced about "rogue states" that are dedicated to the rule of force, acting in the "national interest" as defined by domestic power - most ominously, rogue states that anoint themselves global judge and executioner.

Rogue States: The Narrow Construction

It is also interesting to review the issues that did enter the non-debate on the Iraq crisis. But first a word about the concept "rogue state."

The basic conception is that although the Cold War is over, the US still has the responsibility to protect the world - but from what? Plainly it cannot be from the threat of "radical nationalism" - that is, unwillingness to submit to the will of the powerful. Such ideas are fit only for internal planning documents, not the general public. From the early 1980s, it was clear that the conventional techniques for mass mobilization - the appeal to JFK's "monolithic and ruthless conspiracy," Reagan's "evil empire" - were losing their effectiveness: New enemies were needed.

At home, fear of crime - particularly drugs - was stimulated by "a variety of factors that have little or nothing to do with crime itself," the National Criminal Justice Commission concluded, including media practices and "the role of government and private industry in stoking citizen fear," exploiting latent racial tension for political purposes" with racial bias in enforcement and sentencing that is devastating black communities, creating a "racial abyss," and putting "the nation at risk of a social catastrophe." The results have been described by criminologists as "the American Gulag," the new American Apartheid", with African Americans now a majority of prisoners for the first time in US history, imprisoned at well over seven times the rate of whites, completely out of the range of arrest rates, which themselves target blacks far out of proportion to drug use or trafficking.[12]

Abroad, the threats were to be "international terrorism," "Hispanic narcotraffickers", and most serious of all, "rogue states." A secret 1995 study of the Strategic Command, which is responsible for the strategic nuclear arsenal, outlines the basic thinking. Released through the Freedom of Information Act, the study, *Essentials of Post - Cold War Deterrence*, "shows how the United States shifted its deterrent strategy from the defunct Soviet Union to so-called rogue states such as Iraq, Libya, Cuba, and North Korea," the

Associated Press reports. The study advocates that the US exploit its nuclear arsenal to portray itself as "irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked." That "should be a part of the national persona we project to all adversaries," in particular the "rogue states." "It hurts to portray ourselves as too fully rational and cool-headed," let alone committed to such silliness as international law and treaty obligations. "The fact that some elements" of the US government "may appear to be potentially 'out of control' can be beneficial to creating and reinforcing fears and doubts within the minds of an adversary's decision-makers." The report resurrects Nixon's "madman theory". Our enemies should recognize that we are crazed and unpredictable, with extraordinary destructive force at our command, so they will bend to our will in fear. The concept was apparently devised in Israel in the 1950s by the governing Labor Party, whose leaders "preached in favour of acts of madness", Prime Minister Moshe Sharett records in his diary, warning that "we will go crazy" ("*nishtagea*") if crossed, a "secret weapon" aimed in part against the US, not considered sufficiently reliable at the time. In the hands of the world's sole superpower, which regards itself as an outlaw state and is subject to few constraints from elites within, that stance poses no small problem for the world.[13]

Libya was a favorite choice as "rogue state" from the earliest days of the Reagan administration. Vulnerable and defenseless, it is a perfect punching bag when needed: for example, in 1986, when the first bombing in history orchestrated for prime-time TV was used by the Great Communicator's speech writers to muster support for Washington's terrorist forces attacking Nicaragua, on grounds that the "archterrorist" Qaddafi "has sent $400 million and an arsenal of weapons and advisors into Nicaragua to bring his war home to the United States," which was then exercising its right of self-defense against the armed attack of the Nicaraguan rogue state.

Immediately after the Berlin Wall fell, ending any resort to the Soviet threat, the Bush administration submitted its annual call to Congress for a huge Pentagon budget. It explained that "in a new era, we foresee that our military power will remain an essential underpinning of the global balance, but ... the more likely demands for the use of our military forces may not involve the Soviet Union and may be in the Third World, where new capabilities and approaches may be required," as "when President Reagan directed American naval and air forces to return to [Libya] in 1986" to bombard civilian urban targets, guided by the goal of "contributing to an international environment of peace, freedom, and progress within which our democracy - and other free nations - can flourish." The primary threat we face is the "growing technological sophistication" of the Third World. We must therefore strengthen "the defense industrial base" - a.k.a. high-tech industry - creating incentives " to invest in new facilities and equipments as well as in research and development." And we must maintain intervention forces, particularly those targeting the Middle East, where the "threats to our interests" that have required direct miliary engagement "could not be laid at the Kremlin's door" - contrary to endless fabrication, now put to rest. As had occasionally been recognized in earlier years, sometimes in secret, the "threat" is now conceded officially to be indigenous to the region, the "radical nationalism" that has always been a primary concern, not only in the Middle East.[14]

At the time, the "threats to our interests" could not be laid at Iraq's door either. Saddam was then a favored friend and trading partner. His status changed only a few months later, when he misinterpreted US willingness to allow him to modify the border with Kuwait by force as authorization to take the country over - or, from the perspective of the Bush administration, to duplicate what the US had just done in Panama. At a high-level meeting immediately after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, President Bush articulated the basic problem: "My worry about the Saudis is that they're... going to bug out at the last minute and accept a puppet regime in Kuwait." Chair of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell posed the problem sharply: "[In] the next few days Iraq will withdraw," putting "his puppet in," and " everyone in the Arab world will be

happy."

Historical parallels are never exact, of course. When Washington partially withdrew from Panama after putting its puppet in, there was great anger throughout the hemisphere, including Panama - indeed, throughout much of the world- compelling Washington to veto two Security Council resolutions and to vote against a General Assembly resolution condemning Washington's "flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of states" and calling for the withdrawal of the "US armed invasion forces from Panama." Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was treated differently, in ways remote from the standard version, but readily discovered in print.

The inexpressible facts shed interesting light on the commentary of political analysts: Ronald Steel, for example, who muses on the "conundrum" faced by the US, which, "as the world's most powerful nation, faces greater constraints on its freedom to use force than does any other country" - hence Saddam's success in Kuwait as compared with Washington's inability to exert its will in Panama.[16]

It is worth recalling that debate was effectively foreclosed in 1990-91 as well. There was much discussion of whether sanctions would work, but none of whether they already had worked, perhaps shortly after Resolution 660 was passed. Fear that sanctions might have worked animated Washington's refusal to test Iraqi withdrawal offers from August 1990 to early January 1991. With the rarest of exceptions, the information system kept tight discipline on the matter. Polls a few days before the January 1991 bombing showed 2 to 1 support for a peaceful settlement based on Iraqi withdrawal along with an international conference on the Israel-Arab conflict. Few among those who expressed this position could have heard any public advocacy of it; the media had loyally followed the president's lead, dismissing "linkage" as unthinkable - in this unique case. It is unlikely that any respondents knew that their views were shared by the Iraqi democratic opposition, barred from mainstream media. Or that an Iraqi proposal in the terms they advocated had been released a week earlier by US officials, who found it reasonable, and had been flatly rejected by Washington. Or that an Iraqi withdrawal offer had been considered by the National Security Council as early as mid-August but dismissed, and effectively suppressed, apparently because it was feared that unmentioned Iraqi initiatives might "defuse the crisis," as the *New York Times* diplomatic correspondent obliquely reported administration concerns.

Since then, Iraq has displaced Iran and Libya as the leading "rogue state." Others have never entered the ranks. Perhaps the most relevant case is Indonesia, which shifted from enemy to friend when General Suharto took power in 1965, presiding over a Rwanda-style slaughter that elicited great satisfaction in the West. Since then Suharto has been "our kind of guy," as the Clinton administration described him, while carrying out murderous aggression and endless atrocities against his own people - killing 10,000 Indonesians just in the 1980s, according to the personal testimony of "our guy," who wrote that "the corpses were left lying around as a form of shock therapy."[17] In December 1975 the UN Security Council unanimously ordered Indonesia to withdraw its invading forces form East Timor "without delay" and called upon "all States to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor as well as the inalienable right of its people to self-determination." The US responded by (secretly) increasing shipments of arms to the aggressors; Carter accelerated the arms flow once again as the attack reached near-genocidal levels in 1978. In his memoirs, UN Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan takes pride in his success in rendering the UN "utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook," following the instructions of the State Department, which "wished things to turn out as they did, and worked to bring this about." The US also happily accepts the robbery of East Timor's oil (with participation of a US company), in violation of any reasonable interpretation of international agreements.[18]

The analogy to Iraq/Kuwait is close, though there are differences: to mention only the most obvious, US-sponsored atrocities in East Timor were vastly beyond anything attributed to Saddam Hussein in Kuwait. There are many other examples, though some of those commonly invoked should be treated with caution, particularly concerning Israel. The civilian toll of Israel's US-backed invasion of Lebanon in 1982 exceeded Saddam's in Kuwait, and it remains in violation of a 1978 Security Council resolution ordering it to withdraw forthwith from Lebanon, along with numerous other resolutions regarding Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and other matters; and there would be far more such resolutions if the US did not regularly veto them. But the common charge that Israel, particularly its current government, is violating UN 242 and the Oslo accords, and that the US exhibits a "double standard" by tolerating those violations, is dubious at best, based on serious misunderstanding of these agreements. From the outset, the Madrid-Oslo process was designed and implemented by US-Israeli power to impose a Bantustan-style settlement. The Arab world has chosen to delude itself about the matter, as have many others, but it is clear in the actual documents, and particularly in the US-supported projects of the Rabin-Peres governments, including those for which Netanyahu's Likud government has been denounced.[19]

It is clearly untrue to claim that "Israel is not demonstrably in violation of Security Council decrees,"[20] but the reasons often given should be examined carefully.

Returning to Iraq, it surely qualifies as a leading criminal state. Defending the US plan to attack Iraq at a televised public meeting on February 18, 1998, Secretaries Albright and Cohen repeatedly invoked the ultimate atrocity: Saddam was guilty of "using weapons of mass destruction against his neighbors as well as his own people," his most awesome crime. "It is very important for us to make clear that the United States and the civilized world cannot deal with somebody who is willing to use those weapons of mass destruction on his own people, not to speak of his neighbors," Albright emphasised in an angry response to a questioner who asked about US support for Suharto. Shortly after, Senator Lott condemned Kofi Annan for seeking to cultivate a "human relationship with a mass murderer," and denounced the administration for trusting a person who would sink so low.

Ringing words. Putting aside their evasion of the question raised, Albright and Cohen only forgot to mention - and commentators have been kind enough not to point out - that the acts that they now find so horrifying did not turn Iraq into a "rogue state." And Lott failed to note that his heroes Reagan and Bush forged unusually warm relations with the "mass murderer." There were no passionate calls for a military strike after Saddam's gassing of Kurds at Halabja in March 1988; on the contrary, the US and UK extended their strong support for the mass muderer, then also "our kind of guy." When ABC TV correspondent Charles Glass revealed the site of one of Saddam's biological warfare programs 10 months after Halabja, the State Department denied the facts, and the story died; the department "now issues briefings on the same site," Glass observes.

The two guardians of global order also expedited Saddam's other atrocities - including his use of cyanide, nerve gas, and other barbarous weapons - with intelligence, technology, and supplies, joining with many others. The Senate Banking Committee reported in 1994 that the US Commerce Department had traced shipments of "biological materials" identical to those later found and destroyed by UN inspectors, Bill Blum recalls. These shipments continued at least until November 1989. A month later, Bush authorized new loans for his friend Saddam, to achieve the "goal of increasing US exports and [to] put us in a better position to deal with Iraq regarding its human rights record," the State Department announced with a straight face, facing no criticism (or even report) in the mainstream.

Britain's record was exposed, at least in part, in an official inquiry (the Scott Inquiry). The British govern-

ment has just now been compelled to concede that it continued to grant licenses to British firms to export materials usable for biological weapons after the Scott Inquiry Report was published, at least until December 1996.

In a February 28, 1998, review of Western sales of materials usable for germ warfare and other weapons of mass destruction, the *New York Times* mentions one example of US sales in the 1980s that included "deadly pathogens,' with government approval - some from the army's center for germ research in Fort Detrick. Just the tip of the iceberg, however.[21]

A common current pretense is that Saddam's crimes were unknown, so we are now properly shocked at the discovery and must "make clear" that we civilized folk "cannot deal with" the perperator of such crimes (in Albright's words). The posture is cynical fraud. UN reports of 1986 and 1987 condemned Iraq's use of chemical weapons. US Embassy staffers in Turkey interviewed Kurdish survivors of chemical warfare attacks, and the CIA reported them to the State Department. Human rights groups reported the atrocities of Halabja and elsewhere at once. Secretary of State George Shultz conceded that the US had evidence on the matter. An investigative team sent by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1988 found "overwhelming evidence of extensive use of chemical weapons against civilians, charging that Western acquiescence in Iraqi use of such weapons against Iran had emboldened Saddam to believe - correctly - that he could use them against his own people with impunity - actually against Kurds, hardly "the people" of this tribal-based thug. The chair of the committee, Claiborne Pell, introduced the Prevention of Genocide Act of 1988, denouncing silence "while people are gassed" as "complicity", much as when "the world was silent at Hitler began a campaign that culminated in the near extermination of Europe's Jews," and warning that "we cannot be silent to genocide again." The Reagan administration strongly opposed sanctions and insisted that the matter be silenced, while extending its support for the mass muderer. In the Arab world, "the Kuwait press was amongst the most enthusiastic of the Arab media in supporting Baghdad's crusade against the Kurds," journalist Adel Darwish reports.

In January 1991, while the war drums were beating, the International Commission of Jurists observed to UN Human Rights Commission that "after having perpetrated the most flagrant abuses on its own population without a word of reproach from the UN, Iraq must have concluded it could do whatever it pleased"; UN in this context means US and UK, primarily. That truth must be buried along with international law and other "utopian" distractions.[22]

An unkind commentator might remark that recent US/UK toleration for poison gas and chemical warfare is not too surprising. The British used chemical weapons in their 1919 intervention in North Russia against the Bolsheviks, with great success, according to the British command. As Secretary of State of the War Office in 1919, Winston Churchill was enthusiastic about the prospects of "using poisoned gas against uncivilized tribes" - Kurds and Afghans - and authorized the RAF Middle East command to use chemical weapons "against recalcitrant Arabs as [an] experiment," dismissing objections by the India office as "unreasonable" and deploring the "squeamishness about the use of gas": "We cannot in any circumstances acquiesce in the non-utilization of any weapons which are available to procure a speedy termination of the disorder which prevails on the frontier," he explained; chemical weapons are merely "the application of western science to modern warfare."[23]

The Kennedy administration pioneered the massive use of chemical weapons against civilians as it launched its attack against South Vietnam in 1961-62. There has been much rightful concern about the effects on US soldiers, but not the incomparably worse effects on civilians. Here, at least. In an Israeli mass-circulation daily, the respected journalist Amnon Kapeliouk reported on his 1988 visit to Vietnam, where he

found the "thousands of Vietnamese still die from the effects of American chemical warfare," citing estimates of one-quarter of a million victims in South Vietnam and describing the "terrifying" scenes in hospitals in the South, where children were dying of cancer and hideous birth deformities. It was South Vietnam that was targeted for chemical warfare, not the North, where these consequences are not found, he reports. There is also substantial evidence of US use of biological weapons against Cuba, reported as minor news in 1977, and at worst only a small component of continuing US terror.[24]

These precedents aside, the US and UK are now engaged in a deadly form of biological warfare in Iraq. The destruction of infrastructure and banning of imports to repair it has caused disease, malnutrition, and early death on a huge scale, including more than 500,000 children, according to UNICEF investigations - an average of 5,000 children dying each month. In a bitter condemnation of the sanctions on January 20, 1998, 54 Catholic bishops quoted the archbishop of the southern region of Iraq, who reports that "epidemics rage, taking away infants and the sick by the thousands," while "those children who survive disease succumb to malnutrition." The bishops' statement, reported in full in Stanley Heller's journal *The Struggle*, received scant mention in the press. The US and Britain have taken the lead in blocking aid programs - for example, delaying approval for ambulances on the grounds that they could be used to transport troops, and barring insecticides for preventing the spread of disease and spare parts of sanitation systems. Meanwhile, Western diplomats point out, "The US had directly benefited from [the humanitarian] operation as much, if not more, than the Russians and the French," for example, by purchase of $600 million worth of Iraqi oil (second only to Russia) and sale by US companies of $200 million in humanitarian goods to Iraq. They also report that most of the oil bought by Russian companies ends up in the US.[25]

Washington's support for Saddam reached such an extreme that it was even willing to overlook an Iraqi air force attack on the USS *Stark*, killing 37 crewmen, a privilege otherwise enjoyed only by Israel (in the case of the USS Liberty). It was Washington's decisive support for Saddam, well after the crimes that now so shock the administration and Congress, that led to Iranian capitulation to "Baghdad and Washington," Dilip Hiro concludes in his history of the Iran-Iraq war. The two allies had "co-ordinate[d] their military operations against Teheran." The shooting down of an Iranian civilian airliner by the guided-missile cruiser USS *Vincennes* was the culmination of Washington's "diplomatic, military and economic campaign" in support of Saddam, he writes.[26]

Saddam was also called upon to perform the usual services of a client state: for example, to train several hundred Libyans sent to Iraq by the US so they could overthrow the Qaddafi government, former Reagan White House aide Howard Teicher revealed.[27]

It was not his massive crimes that elevated Saddam to the rank of "Beast of Baghdad." Rather, it was his stepping out of line, much as in the case of the far more minor criminal Noriega, whose major crimes were also committed while he was a US client.

Exempt Rogue States

The qualification of "rogue state" are illuminated further by Washington's reaction to the uprisings in Iraq in March 1991, immediately after the cessation of hostilities. The State Department formally reiterated its refusal to have any dealings with the Iraqi democratic opposition, and just as before the Gulf War, they were virtually denied access to the major US media. "Political meetings with them would not be appropriate for our policy at this time," State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher stated. "This time" happened to be March 14, 1991, while Saddam was decimating the southern opposition under the eyes of

General Schwarzkopf, who refused even to permit rebelling military officers access to captured Iraqi arms. had it not been for unexpected public reaction, Washington probably would not have extended even tepid support to rebelling Kurds, subjected to the same treatment shortly after.

Iraqi opposition leaders got the message. Leith Kubba, head of the London-based Iraqi Democratic Reform Movement, alleged that the US favours a military dictatorship, insisting that "changes in the regime must come from within, from people already in power." London-based banker Ahmed Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, said that "the United States, covered by the fig leaf of non-interference in Iraqi affairs, is waiting for Saddam to butcher the insurgents in he hope that the can be overthrown later by a suitable officer," an attitude rooted in the US policy of "supporting dictatorships to maintain stability."

Administration reasoning was outlined by *New York Times* chief diplomatic correspondent Thomas Friedman. While opposing a popular rebellion, Washington did hope that a military coup might remove Saddam, "and then Washington would have the best of all worlds: an iron-fisted Iraqi junta without Saddam Hussein," a return to the days when Saddam's iron fist.... held Iraq together, much to the satisfaction of the American allies Turkey and Saudi Arabia," not to speak of Washington. Two years later, in another useful recognition of reality, he observed that "it has always been American policy that the iron-fisted Mr. Hussein plays a useful role in holding Iraq together," maintaining "stability." There is little reason to believe that Washington has modified the preference for dictatorship over democracy deplored by the ignored Iraqi democratic opposition, though it doubtless would prefer a different "iron fist" at this point. If not, Saddam will have to do.[28]

The concept "rogue state" is highly nuanced. Thus, Cuba qualifies as a leading "rogue state" because of its alleged involvement in international terrorism, but the US does not fall into the category despite its terrorist attacks against Cuba for close to 40 years, apparently continuing through 1997, according to important investigative reporting of the *Miami Herald*, which failed to reach the national press (here; it did in Europe.) Cuba was a "rogue state" when its military forces were in Angola, backing the government against South African attacks supported by the US. South Africa, in contrast, was not a rogue state then, nor during the Reagan years, when it caused more than $60 billion in damage and 1.5 million deaths in neighboring states, according to a UN commission, not to speak of some events at home - and with ample US/UK support. The same exemption applies to Indonesia and many others.

The criteria are fairly clear: a "rogue state" is not simply a criminal state, but one that defies the orders of the powerful - who are, of course, exempt.

More on "The Debate"

That Saddam is a criminal is undoubtedly true, and one should be pleased, I suppose, that the US and UK, and the mainstream doctrinal institutions have at last joined those who "prematurely" condemned US/UK support for the mass murderer. It is also true that he poses a threat to anyone within his reach. On the comparison of the threat with others, there is little unanimity outside the US and UK, after their (ambiguous) transformation from August 1990. Their 1998 plan to use force was justified in terms of Saddam's threat to the region, but there was no way to conceal the fact that the people of the region objected to their salvation, so strenuously that governments were compelled to join in opposition.

Bahrein reused to allow US/UK forces to use bases there. The president of the United Arab Emirates described US threats of military action as "bad and loathsome," and declared that Iraq does not pose a

threat to its neighbors. Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan had already stated that "we'll not agree and we are against striking Iraq as a people and as a country," warning Washington to refrain from a request to use Saudi bases. After Ankara insisted long-standing Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal reaffirmed that any use of Saudi air bases "has to be a UN, not a US, issue."

An editorial in Egypt's quasi-official journal *Al-Ahram* described Washington's stand as "coercive, aggressive, unwise, and uncaring about the lives of Iraqis who are unnecessarily subjected to sanctions and humiliation," and denounced the planned U.S. "aggression against Iraq." Jordan's Parliament condemned "any aggression against Iraq's territory and any harm that might come to the Iraqi people"; the Jordanian army was forced to seal off the city of Maan after two days of pro-Iraq rioting. A political science professor at Kuwait University warned that "Saddam has come to represent the voice of the voiceless in the Arab world," expressing popular frustration over the "New World Order" and Washington's advocacy of Israeli interests.

Even in Kuwait, support for the US stance was at best "tepid" and "cynical over US motives," the press recognized. "Voices in the streets of the Arab world, from Cairo's teeming slums to the Arabian Peninsula's shiny capitals, have been rising in anger as the American drumbeat of war against Iraq grows louder," *Boston Globe* correspondent Charles Sennott reported.[29]

The Iraqi democratic opposition was granted slight exposure in the mainstream, breaking the previous pattern. In a telephone interview with the New York Times, Ahmed Chalabi reiterated the position that had been reported in greater detail in *London weeks* earlier: "Without a political plan to remove Saddam's regime, military strikes will be counterproductive," he argued, killing thousands of Iraqis, perhaps even leaving Saddam strengthened along with his weapons of mass destruction, and with "an excuse to throw out UNSCOM [the UN weapons inspectors]," who have in fact destroyed vastly more weapons and production facilities than the 1991 bombing. US/UK plans would "be worse than nothing." Interviews with opposition leaders from several groups found "near unanimity" in opposing military action that did not lay the basis for an uprising to overthrow Saddam. Speaking to a parliamentary committee, Chalabi held that it was "morally indefensible to strike Iraq without a strategy" for removing Saddam.

In London, the opposition also outlined an alternative program: (1) declare Saddam a war criminal; (2) recognize a provisional Iraqi government formed by the opposition; (3) unfreeze hundreds of millions of dollars of Iraqi assets abroad; and (4) restrict Saddam's forces by a "no-drive zone," or extend the "no-flight zone" to cover the whole country. The US should "help the Iraqi people remove Saddam from power," Chalabi told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Along with other opposition leaders, he "rejected assassination, covert US operations, or US ground troops," Reuters reported, calling instead for "a popular insurgency." Similar proposals have occasionally appeared in the U.S. Washington claims to have attempted support for opposition groups, but their own interpretation is different. Chalabi's view, published in England is much as it was years earlier: "Everyone says Saddam is boxed in, but it is the Americans and British who are boxed in by their refusal to support the idea of political change."

Regional opposition was regarded as a problem to be evaded, not a factor to be taken into account any more than international law. The same was true of warnings by senior U.N. and other international relief officials in Iraq that the planned bombing might have a "catastrophic" effect on people already suffering miserably, and might terminate the humanitarian operations that have brought at least some relief. "What matters is to establish that "what we say goes", as President Bush triumphantly proclaimed, announcing the New World Order as bombs and missiles were falling in 1991.

As Kofi Annan was preparing to go to Baghdad, former Iranian president Rafsanjani, "still a pivotal figure in Teheran, was given an audience by the ailing King Fahd in Saudi Arabia," British Middle East correspondent David Gardner reported, "in contrast to the treatment experienced by Madeleine Albright ... on her recent trips to Riyadh seeking support from America's main Gulf ally." As Rafsanjani's 10-day visit ended on March 2, 1998, Foreign Minister Prince Saud described it as "one more step in the right direction towards improving relations," reiterating that "the greatest destabilizing element in the Middle East and the cause of all other problems in the region" is Israel's policy towards the Palestinians and US support for it, which might activate popular forces that Saudi Arabia greatly fears, as well as undermine its legitimacy as "guardian" of Islamic holy places, including the Dome of the Rock in East Jerusalem (now effectively annexed by US/Israeli programs as part of their intent to extend "greater Jerusalem" virtually to the Jordan Valley, to be retained by Israel.) Shortly before, the Arab states had boycotted a US-sponsored economic summit in Qatar that was intended to advance the "New Middle East" project of Clinton and Peres. Instead, they attended an Islamic conference in Teheran in December, joined even by Iraq.[2]

These are tendencies of considerable import, relating to the background concerns that motivate US policy in the region: its insistence, since World War II, on controlling the world's major energy reserves. As many have observed, in the Arab world's major energy reserves. As many have observed, in the Arab world there is growing fear and resentment of the long-standing Israel-Turkey alliance that was formalized in 1996, now greatly strengthened. For some years, it had been a component of the US strategy of controlling the region with "local cops on the beat," as Nixon's defense secretary put the matter. There is apparently a growing appreciation of the Iranian advocacy of regional security arrangements to replace US domination. A related matter is the intensifying conflict over pipelines to bring Central Asian oil to the rich countries, one natural outlet beign via Iran. And US energy corporations will not be happy to see foreign rivals - now including China and Russia-gain privileged access to Iraqi oil reserves, second only to Saudi Arabia's in scale, or to Iran's natural gas, oil, and other resources.

For the present, Clinton planners may well be relieved to have escaped temporarily from the "box" they had constructed, which was leaving them no option but a bombing of Iraq that could have been harmful even to the interests they represent. The respite is temporary. It offers opportunities to citizens of the warrior states to bring about changes of consciousness and commitment that could make a great difference in the not-too-distant future.

Source:* Rogue State*: The rule of force in world affairs, published by: India Research Press

The New Military Humanism: Lessons From Kosovo, Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1999.

The Political Economy of Human Rights, volumes I and II (The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism and After The Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction Imperial Ideology), with Edward Herman. Cambridge, MA. South End Press, 1979.

Profit over People : Neoliberalism and Global Order. New York: Seven Stories, 1998.

Pirates and Emperors : International Terrorism in the Real World. Claremont, 1986; Montreal, Quebec. Black Rose Books, 1987.

Amana, 1988.

Powers and Prospects : Reflections on Human Nature and the Social Order. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. 1996

Rethinking Camelot: JFK, the Vietnam War, and US Political Culture, Cambridge, MA. South End Press, 1993

Towards a New Cold War: Essays on the Current Crisis and How We Got There. New York: Pantheon,1982,.

Turning the Tide: US Intervention in Central America and the Struggle for Peace. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1985

The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism. The Political Economy of Human Rights: Volume I. with Edward Herman

Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1979.

World Orders Old and New. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996.

Year 501: The Conquest Continues. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1993.

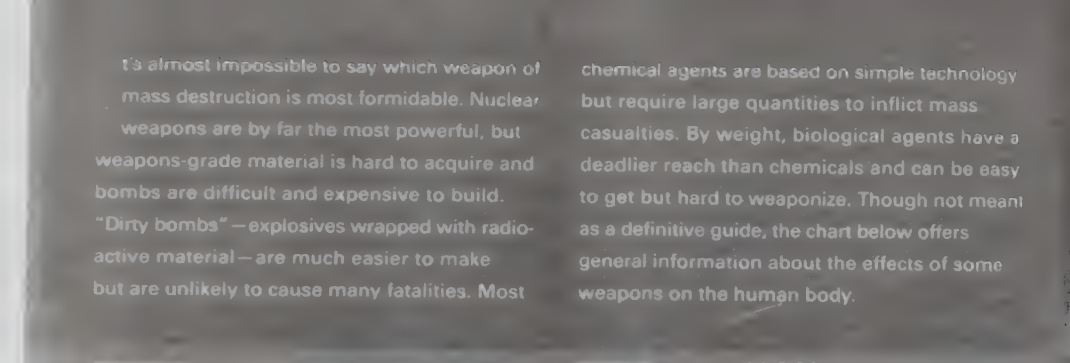
Rogue States

This article orginally appeared in Z Magazine, April 1998.

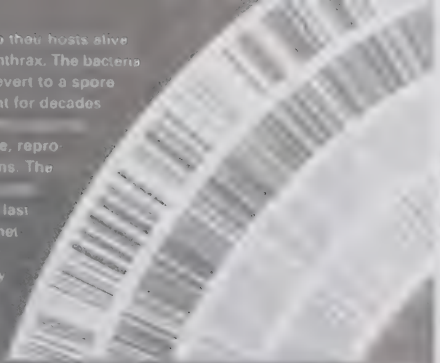
1. Mark Cutis, The Abiguities of Power (Zed, 1995), 146.
2. Jules Kagian, Middle Eas International, Oct. 21, 1994; Kagian, FT, Feb. 19, 1998, Steven Erlanger and Philip Shenon, NYT, Feb. 23, 1998; Clinton press conference, NYT, Feb. 24, 1998; R.W. apple, NYT, Feb 24, 1998, Aaron Zitner, BG, Feb 21. 1998
3. Column Lynch, BG, March 3, 1998; Weston, Costa Rica, BG, March 3, 1'998; WSJ, March 3, 1998, Barbara Crossette, NYT, March 3, 1998; Laura Silber and David Buchan,FT, March 4, 1998, Steven Lee Myers, NYT, March 4, 1998, R W Apple, Feb.24,1998 9Lott); Steven Erlanger and Philip Shenon, NYT, Feb. 23, 1998 (McCain, Kerry), Aaron Zinter, "A Visible Kerry Turns Tough on Crisis," BG, Feb .21 1998.
4. Editorial, BG, Feb. 27, 1998, William Pfaff, BG, Feb. 23, 1998; Ronald Steel, NYT, March 1, 1998.
5. Nov. 29, 1990.
6. Aug. 2, 1990.
7. Editorial, FT, March 2, 1998.
8. See chap. 1,p,4 in this valume.
9. See my Culture of Terrorism, 67f, and my Necessary Illusions, 82f., 94f., 270.
10. National Security Council 5429/2; my emphasis.
11. See my For Reasons of State, 100ff.; Pirates and Emperors, 140; UN Ambassador Thomas Pickering and Justice Dept., cited in my Deterring Democracy, 147; andWorld Orders Old and New, 16f.; George Kahin, Intervention (Knopf, 1986), 74.
12. Steven Donziger, ed., The Real War on Crime: The Report of the National Criminal Justice Commission (HarperCollins, 1996); Nils Christie, Crime Control as Industry(Routledge, 1993)' Michael Tonry, Malign Neglect: Race, Crime and Punishment in Amrica (Oxford, 1995); Randall Shelden and william, Brown, Criminal Justice(Wadsworth) forthcoming). See chap. 5.
13. "Irrationality Suggeted to Intimidate US Enemies," AP, BG, March2, 1998. See chaps 1,7 and 8 in this volume, for further details. On teh Israeli theory, see my FatefulTriangle, 464ff.
14. George Bush, National Security Strategy of the United States, White HOuse, March 1990; for more extensive quotations, see my Deterring Democracy, Chap. 1.
15. On these matters and what follows, see my articles in Z magazine in 1990-91; Detrring Democracy (Chaps 4-6, afterword), Powers and Prospects, chap. 76; my article in Cynthya Peters, ed., Collateral Damage: The "New World Order" at Home and abroad (South End, 1992). Also Dilip Hiro, Desrt Sheilf to Desert Storm (Routledge, 1992); Douglas Kellner, the Persian Gulf TV War (Westview, 1992); Miron Rezun, Saddam Hussein's Gulf Wars (Praeger, 1992); and a number of useful collections. There is also a much (self)-praised "scholarly history" by Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, which contains useful information but with serious omissions and errors: The Gult Conflict 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order (Princeton, 1992). See my World Orders Old and New, chap. 1, note 18; and my "World order and Its Rules," Journal of Law and Society (Cardiff, Wales), Summer 1993.
16. Ronald Steel, NYT, March 1, 1998.
17. Cited by Charles Glass, Prospect (London), March 1998.
18. See chaps. 1 and 4, in this volume.
19. See my articles in Z magazine from the Madrid conference in 1991 through the Oslo conference in 1993, and beyond. Also Deterring Democracy, chap. 6 and afterword; Powers and Prospects, Chap. 6; World Orders Old and New, chap. 3 and epilogue; and sources cited. For futher update, see my "The "Peace Process' in US Global Strategy", address at Ben-Gurion University conference, June 1997, in Haim Gordon, ed., Looking Back at the June 1967 War (Preager, 1999); and my Fateful Triangle.
20. Serge Schmemann and Douglas Jehl, NYT, Feb. 27, 1998.
21. See sources cited earlier. Albright, Cohen, CNN live report, Ohio State Univ., Feb 18, 1998, partial transcript (omitting the interchange quoted), NYT, Feb. 19, 1998. Trent Lott, BG, Feb. 2, 1998. Chrles Glass, New Statesman, Feb 20, 1998 Bill Blum, Consortium, March 2, 1990. William Borad and Judith Miler, NYT, Feb. 26, 1998 Scott Inquiry Report, Feb. 1996. Gerald James, In the Public Interest (London: Little, Brown, 1996). Alan Friedman, Spider's Web: The Secreta History of How the White House Illiegally Armed Iraq (Bantam, 1993). Mark Phythian, Arming Iraq: How the U.S and Britain Secretly Built Saddam's War Machine (Northeastern Univ. Press, 1997).
22. David Korn, ed., Human Rights in Iraq (Human Rights Watch, Yale, 1989). CARDRI (Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Right in Iraq), Saddam's Iraq (Zed, 1986, 1989), 236f; Dilip Hiro, The Longest War (Routledge, 1991), 53. Rezun, Saddam Hussein's GulfWars, 43f; Darwish and Gregory Alexander, Unholy Babylon (St. Martin's 1991), 78f; John Gittings, "How West Propped Up Saddam's Rule", GW, March 10, 1991.
23. Andy Thomas, Effects of Chemical Warfare (Stockholm International Peace Research Institue [SIPRI], Taylor & Frances, 1985), chap. 2. See my Turning the Tide, 126; and Deterrring Democracy, 181f.

24. *On Vietnam, see my Necessary Illusions, 38f. On Cuba, see Chomsky and Edward Herman, Political Economy of Human Rights, vol. I, 69; and much subsequent material, including Alexander Cockburn, Nation, March 9, 1998.*
25. *The Struggle (New Haven), Feb. 21, 1998; Maggie O'Kane, Guardian, Feb. 19, 1998, Scott Peterson, CSM, Feb. 17, 1998; Roula Khalaf, FT, March 2, 1998. The impact of the bombing and sanctions was known at once; see Jean Dreze and Haris Gazdar, Hunger and Poverty in Iraq 1991, London School of Economics, Sept. 1991. For extensive reviews, see Geoff Simons, The Scourging of Iraq (London: Macmillan, 1996).*
26. *Hiro, Longest War, 239f.*
27. *AP, NYT, May 26, 1993*
28. *NYT, July 7, 1991; June 28, 1993. On Kubba, Chalabi, see my article in Peters, Collateral Damage.*
29. *David Marcus, BG, Feb. 18, 1998; Roula Khalaf, Mark Suzman, David Gardner, FT, Feb. 23, 1998; FT, Feb. 9, 1998; Robin Allen, FT, March 3, 1998; Steven Lee Myers, NYT, Feb. 9, 1998; Douglas Jehl, NYT, Feb. 9, 1998; Charles Sennott, BG, Feb. 18, 1998, Feb. 19, 1998; Daniel Pearl, WSJ, Feb. 25, 1998.*
30. *David Fairhall and Ian Black, GW, Feb. 8, 1998; Reuters, BG, March 3, 1998; Douglas Jehl, NYT, Feb. 22, 1998; Jimmy Burns, FT, Feb. 15, 1998.*
31. *Peterson, CSM, Feb. 17, 1998.*
32. *David Gardner, FT, Feb. 28, 1998; Robin Allen, FT, March 3, 1998.*

It's almost impossible to say which weapon of mass destruction is most formidable. Nuclear weapons are by far the most powerful, but weapons-grade material is hard to acquire and bombs are difficult and expensive to build. "Dirty bombs"—explosives wrapped with radioactive material—are much easier to make but are unlikely to cause many fatalities. Most chemical agents are based on simple technology but require large quantities to inflict mass casualties. By weight, biological agents have a deadlier reach than chemicals and can be easy to get but hard to weaponize. Though not meant as a definitive guide, the chart below offers general information about the effects of some weapons on the human body.



Most pathogens need to keep their hosts alive long enough to spread. Not anthrax. The bacteria quickly kill their host, then revert to a spore form that can remain dormant for decades [illegible] lodge in the lungs, germinate, reproduce, and release lethal toxins. The [illegible] in research, was identified in last fall's U.S. postal attacks by genetic fingerprinting. The anthrax genome has now been entirely sequenced; a partial genome map is shown at right.



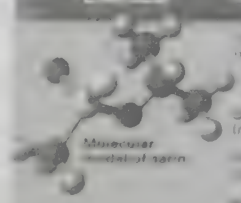
Biological

[illegible]

AGENT AND TYPE	VACCINE	% UNTREATED	INCUBATION PERIOD (DAYS)	DURATION OF ILLNESS (DAYS)
[illegible] (bacterium)	No	90-100%	1-7	3-5
Plague (bacterium)	Yes	100%	1-6	If untreated, usually fatal within 6 days
[illegible] pneumonic/septic	No	30-40%	1-14	14 or more
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Yes	30%	7-17	10-28
Botulinum (toxin)	No	60-100%	1-5	Days to weeks
Ricin (toxin)	No	Variable	18-24 hours	Days

VACCINE	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT
Yes	[illegible] toxemia, cyanosis, terminal shock	
Yes (not in U.S.)	[illegible]	Same as above
[illegible] new drug)	[illegible]	
[illegible] new drug)	Fever, [illegible] severe sweats	Antibiotics, antimalarials, supportive care
Yes	[illegible] 2-3 days later, flat red spots appear and progress to pus filled lesions on skin and lining of the mouth and throat	Intravenous hydration, nutrition, pain control. Studies show promising results for antiviral drugs, if given very early.
[illegible]	Weakness, dizziness, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, difficulty talking and swallowing, blurred vision, drooping [illegible]	Intensive medical and nursing care. Possible use of ventilator for [illegible]. Antitoxin could be helpful if use [illegible]
[illegible]	Fever, nausea, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, difficulty breathing, kidney failure, circulatory [illegible]	Inhalation, therapy for acute lung injury and pulmonary edema. Ingestion: gastric lavage, activated charcoal, fluid and electrolyte replacement

Chemical



Molecular model of sarin

AGENT AND TYPE	APPEARANCE AND ODOR	METHOD OF ABSORPTION	RATE OF ACTION
[illegible] (nerve agent)	[illegible] liquid; slight fruity odor	Skin contact and/or [illegible]	Rapid (within minutes)
Sarin (nerve agent)	Colorless liquid; no odor when [illegible]	Skin contact and/or [illegible]	Rapid
[illegible]	Colorless to amber liquid; no odor when pure	Skin contact and/or inhalation	Rapid
[illegible]	Colorless to brownish liquid; slight odor of garlic or mustard	Skin contact and/or inhalation	Delayed for hours; long-term [illegible]
[illegible]	Colorless gas or liquid; odor of bitter almonds	Inhalation	Rapid
Phosgene (choking agent)	Colorless gas, odor of fresh mown hay	Inhalation	Immediate to 72 hours

AGENT	EFFECTS	TREATMENT
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

*Approximate median lethal dose (50 percent of those exposed die) in milligrams per minute per cubic meter (inhaled) or milligrams per kilogram of body weight (skin). The fewer the milligrams, the more toxic the agent.

**May be required before decontamination.

Nuclear

Plutonium button

TYPE OF DISPERSAL	MATERIALS AND SOURCES
[illegible]	[illegible] Plutonium (both elements available only through nuclear weapons programs)
"Dirty bomb" (radiological dispersal device)	Americium 241 (used in exploratory oil drilling and density gauges) [illegible] Cobalt 60 (medical therapy, industrial irradiators, radiography) Iridium 192 (industrial uses and medical therapy) Strontium 90 (industrial heating devices)

EFFECTS	TREATMENT
[illegible] effects, intense radiation near detonation site, death from trauma or significant radiation sickness from direct ionizing radiation and from fallout.	Ionizing radiation causes no unique disease. Treatment depends on type of radiation, total dose and dose rate, extent of exposure, and factors such as the age and health of the victim.
[illegible] adverse economic impact, including high cleanup costs. Danger from flying [illegible] Severity of injury depends on proximity to blast, duration of exposure, and [illegible]	After significant doses to the whole body, victims experience immunosuppression and bleeding, and should be treated for infection and given platelet transfusions. Radiation burns can be treated as any other burn injury. Therapies include the use of cytokines currently used to treat leukemia, lymphoma, aplastic anemia, and AIDS. Drugs such as calcium or zinc DTPA (diethylenetriamine [illegible]

***DTPA and Prussian blue are currently classified as investigational new drugs by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

†Effective medical treatment varies with each individual patient and with the circumstances of exposure. For more information consult your personal physician or a medical professional.

[illegible] ANTHRAX ART BY JOHN D. ANDERSON JR. ANTHRAX GENOME COURTESY THE INSTITUTE FOR GENOMIC RESEARCH

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED

SOURCE: National Geograp

International Instruments Concerning Refugees		
Short Name	**Full Name**	**Description**
1951 Statute	Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.	The Statute of the High Commissioner's office, adopted by General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950. This sets out UNHCR's function and responsibility to provide international protection and to seek permanent solutions to the problem of refugees. It serves as UNHCR's constitution and includes a definition of persons who are of concern to the H.C. The mandate has been modified over time through subsequent General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions.
1951 Convention 1967 Protocol	1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.	An international treaty which is binding upon the signatory states. It sets out the responsibilities of states which are parties to the Convention vis-à-vis refugees on their territories, and sets out the obligations of the refugees.
OAU Convention	OAU Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa (Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 1969).	A regional complement to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. It contains an expanded refugee definition as well as provisions on safe and peaceful asylum, burden-sharing and voluntary repatriation.
i. Cartagena Declaration ii. St. Jose Convention	i. Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, 1984. ii. American Convention on Human Rights, "Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica", 1969.	Non binding declarations which have greatly influenced regional policies on refugees and asylum seekers, and contain an expanded refugee definition.
Excom Conclusions	Various conclusions on international protection adopted by UNHCR's Executive Committee.	Contain important guidance to States and UNHCR.
Related Instruments		
The UN Charter	The Charter of the United Nations, 1945.	Places certain general obligations on member states of the United Nations of particular relevance to UNHCR's international protection function.
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.	Universal instrument setting out the basic human rights of all persons, including refugees.
Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons	Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954.	Grants a recognized status to stateless persons who are lawful and habitual residents. Similar to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.
Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961.	Contains measures to ensure that persons do not become stateless.

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966.	Obliges states which are parties to the Covenant to respect and ensure the rights set out in the Covenant to all individuals (within the state's territory and jurisdiction), without distinction such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
Convention Against Torture	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984.	Includes the principle of non-refoulement.
Convention Relating to the Rights of the Child	Convention Relating to the Rights of the Child, 1989.	A comprehensive code of rights for all children (defined as 18 years or under).
Geneva Conventions and additional protocols	Geneva Convention Relating to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Geneva, 1949).	Covers the treatment of civilians in time of war, including refugees.
Declaration on Territorial Asylum	United Nations Declaration on Territorial Asylum, 1967.	Includes the principle of non-refoulement.
Final Act of the Untied Nations Conference on the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954	United Nations Conference on the Status of Stateless Persons.	Includes the principle of non-refoulement.

Source: Handbook for Emergencies (UNHCR).

Common diseases

Disease	Major contributing factors	Preventive measures
Diarrhoeal diseases	Overcrowding, contamination of water and food Lack of hygiene	◆ adequate living space ◆ public health education ◆ distribution of soap ◆ good personal and food hygiene ◆ safe water supply and sanitation
Measles	Overcrowding Low vaccination coverage	◆ minimum living space standards as defined in chapter 12 on site planning ◆ immunization of children with distribution of vitamin A. Immunization from 6 months up to 12-15 years (rather than the more usual 5 years) is recommended because of the increased risks from living conditions
Acute respiratory infections	Poor housing Lack of blankets and clothing Smoke in living area	◆ minimum living space standards and ◆ proper shelter, adequate clothing, sufficient blankets
Malaria	New environment with a strain to which the refugees are not immune Stagnant water which becomes a breeding area for mosquitoes	◆ destroying mosquito breeding places, larvae and adult mosquitoes by spraying. However the success of vector control is dependent on particular mosquito habits and local experts must be consulted ◆ provision of mosquito nets ◆ drug prophylaxis (e.g. pregnant women according to national protocols)
Meningococcal meningitis	Overcrowding in areas where disease is endemic (often has local seasonal pattern)	◆ minimum living space standards ◆ immunization only after expert advice when surveys suggest necessity
Tuberculosis	Overcrowding Malnutrition High HIV prevalence	◆ minimum living space standards (but where it is endemic it will remain a problem) ◆ immunization
Typhoid	Overcrowding Poor personal hygiene Contaminated water supply Inadequate sanitation	◆ minimum living space standards ◆ safe water, proper sanitation ◆ good personal, food and public hygiene and public health education WHO does not recommend vaccination as it offers only low, short-term individual protection and little or no protection against the spread of the disease
Worms especially hookworms	Overcrowding Poor sanitation	◆ minimum living space standards ◆ proper sanitation, good personal hygiene ◆ wearing shoes
Scabies[1]	Overcrowding Poor personal hygiene	◆ minimum living space standards ◆ enough water and soap for washing
Xerophthalmia Vitamin A deficiency	Inadequate diet Following acute prolonged infections, measles and diarrhoea	◆ adequate dietary intake of vitamin A. If not available, provide vitamin A fortified food. If this is not possible, vitamin A supplements ◆ immunization against measles. Systematic prophylaxis for children, every 4-6 months
Anaemia	Malaria, hookworm, poor absorption or insufficient intake of iron and folate	◆ prevention/treatment of contributory disease ◆ correction of diet including food fortification
Tetanus	Injuries to unimmunized population Poor obstetrical practice causes neo-natal tetanus	◆ good first aid ◆ immunization of pregnant women and subsequent general immunization within EPI ◆ training of midwives and clean ligatures, scissors, razors, etc.
Hepatitis	Lack of hygiene Contamination of food and water	◆ safe water supply ◆ effective sanitation ◆ safe blood transfusions
STD's/HIV	Loss of social organization Poor transfusion practices Lack of information	◆ test syphilis during pregnancy ◆ test all blood before transfusion ◆ ensure adherence to universal precautions ◆ health education ◆ availability of condoms ◆ treat partners

[1] *Scabies: skin disease caused by burrowing mites*

Source: Handbook for Emergencies (UNHCR).

International People's Health Council

ALAMES - Asociacion Latinoamericana de Medicina Social

Joint statement by the organizers of the HEALTH FORUM
(2nd International Forum for the Advocacy of People's Health as an Essential Human Need)

Porto Alegre, Brazil: 25th January 2003

URGENT PRESS RELEASE

STOP THE WAR on Iraq !

"A war on Iraq will lead to a health and humanitarian crisis. It is disastrous for the people of the world".

(An unanimous statement issued and signed by the participants of the 2nd Health Forum, held at Porto Alegre, Brazil (20th to 22nd January 2003)

We, the participants at the 2nd Health Forum at Porto Alegre, Brazil are greatly alarmed by and unequivocally condemn, the preparations for a full-blown war against Iraq currently being undertaken by the United States of America and United Kingdom.

This forum unanimously warns the Bush and Tony Blair administrations that the consequences of a war on Iraq is disastrous for the health and lives of the people of Iraq, its neighbouring countries and the rest of the world. We urge the two governments to put public interest and peace before their military and private commercial interests. The war plans are impermissible, undemocratic and immoral. It must be stopped.

Testimonies by health and humanitarian workers, public health professionals and others who are assembled here (including some who often provide front-line medical, health and humanitarian assistance during war, conflict and humanitarian situations) who are present here, for this international forum reminds that more than 90 % of the casualties in any war are innocent civilians. All wars destabilise the already over burdened health systems. Case of Iraq will no way be different. The Health Forum endorses the observations made by the MEDACT (a constituent of the People's health Movement) and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in their recent scientific report about the potential health and humanitarian consequences of the proposed war.

The 12 year embargo and trade sanctions have killed thousands Iraqi people and unmitigated hardships to the ordinary civilians in Iraq. It has also crippled the economy and devastated public life, leaving millions of children malnourished and reversing the health standards.

The war will also lead to a wider regional conflict in the Middle East that will have long-term devastating

health, humanitarian, social, economic and political consequences. What we need to leave for the next generation is not a sense of death and destruction, but of peace, solidarity, non-violence and understanding. We need to work towards a just and peaceful world, which is not only possible, but also necessary.

We extend our solidarity for the ongoing efforts by the peace and other social movements to stop this war. We appeal to the people of the world to join us in condemning all expressions of military terrorism and war. In today's context of an advanced development of weapons of mass destruction, life is too precious to bear the burden of war.

(For media enquiries regarding the Health Forum and this statement, please look into: **communications@phmovement.org**)

Vital statistics (Iraq and Health):

3,900,000 deaths if nuclear weapons are used[1]. The majority of casualties will be civilians.

48,000 to over 260,000 people will die[2]: The total possible deaths on all sides during the conflict and the following three months range from. Civil war within Iraq could add another 20,000 deaths. Additional later deaths from post-war adverse health effects could reach 200,000.

US $150-200 Bn.: The financial burden will be enormous on all sides, with arms spending, occupation costs, relief and reconstruction possibly exceeding $150-200bn. The US is likely to spend $50bn - $200bn on the war and $5bn 20bn annually on the occupation.

US $ 9 Billion: The resources required to provide water and sanitation for the people in developing countries (annual expenditure)[3].

US $ 780 Billion: Annual military expenditure[4].

30,000 children will die by this time tomorrow: Every 24 hours, 30,000 children will die from preventable diseases on our planet earth[5]

[1] *Collateral damage: a joint report by the Meact and IPPNW*

[2] *Collateral damage: a joint report by the Meact and IPPNW*

[3] *UNDP, 1998*

[4] *UNDP, 1998*

[5] *www.TheMillionSignatureCampaign.org*

Voices against sanctions:

Many organizations and networks have demanded the lifting of sanctions on Iraq. They believe that it is ordinary civilians who suffer. The following is from the **People's Charter for Health**, the largest consensus document on health. People's Charter for Health is the guiding spirit for the **People's Health Movement**.

People's Charter for Health:
Section on War, violence, conflict and natural disasters:

War, violence, conflict and natural disasters devastate communities and destroy human dignity. They have a severe impact on the physical and mental health of their members, especially women and children. Increased arms procurement and an aggressive and corrupt international arms trade undermine social, political and economic stability and the allocation of resources to the social sector.

This Charter calls on people of the world to:

- Support campaigns and movements for peace and disarmament.
- Support campaigns against aggression, and the research, production, testing and use of weapons of mass destruction and other arms, including all types of landmines.
- Support people's initiatives to achieve a just and lasting peace, especially in countries with experiences of civil war and genocide.
- Condemn the use of child soldiers, and the abuse and rape, torture and killing of women and children.
- Demand the end of occupation as one of the most destructive tools to human dignity.
- Oppose the militarisation of humanitarian relief interventions.
- Demand the radical transformation of the UN Security Council so that it functions democratically.
- **Demand that the United Nations and individual states end all kinds of sanctions used as an instrument of aggression which can damage the health of civilian populations.**
- Encourage independent, people-based initiatives to declare neighbourhoods, communities and cities areas of peace and zones free of weapons.
- Support actions and campaigns for the prevention and reduction of aggressive and violent behaviour, especially in men, and the fostering of peaceful coexistence.

Support actions and campaigns for the prevention of natural disasters and the reduction of subsequent human suffering.

People's Health Movement

www.phmovement.org

To join the PHM's 'working circle' on
"wars, disasters and conflicts : health and humanitarian action in such situations",
write to: PHM_Humanitarian_action_circle@yahoogroups.com

Source: www.phmovement.org

Caught in "crossfire":
Iraqi people's saga of suffering continues

Unnikrishnan P.V. and S. Parasuraman
Baghdad, February 2nd week, 2003

There is an old saying: "When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers." Two wars and 12 years of harsh economic sanctions on Iraq prove how accurate this saying is. The Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, the US-Iraq war of 1991 and the economic sanctions that followed have taken a heavy toll on the people of Iraq, especially children and women. Life in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq looks normal on the surface, as the proud people here try to do everything possible to stay alive with dignity, concealing immense pain and frustration. As a section of the international community and the UN put their best efforts to avert a war that seems imminent, the question that Iraqi people are asking is how long their sufferings will continue, and how much more they can take?

We met Jihan Abbas, 3, and her mother Jebhe Shaalan at a cancer ward of the Saddam Paediatric Teaching Hospital, Baghdad last week. Jihan looks comfortable in her mother's arms. They come from Yathrib, a village located 250 km north of Iraq in Sahahaddin governorate. Jihan has an elder brother aged 4 and a younger sister just a year old. Jihan has just arrived that day for yet another course of treatment, after several rounds. She has leukaemia.

Jihan's mother is worried about the safety of her one-year-old child left with their 36-member joint family back in Yathrib. Jihan has to remain hospitalised for 10 days. Then it is back to home for ten-days, only to return to the hospital after that. Doctors wish they could keep her in the hospital for a longer time, but there is more patients awaiting admission and treatment. "We are trying to accommodate everyone. So the patients take turns. We know that the treatment is not enough, but that is what is realistically possible," says a doctor.

The 300-bed hospital, almost a home for several hundred children with leukaemia and other complications, treats the patients on a rotational basis. The hospital has always remained full over the past several years, and the caseload has been increasing. What complicates the situation of this under-equipped, understaffed hospital is a new set of symptoms and diseases that the doctors are not familiar with. And the sanctions completely shut out any access to advances in cancer treatment made elsewhere in the world. A large share of the leukaemia cases comes from southern Iraq, a theatre of the 1991 war.

During the 1991 war, the US and its allies dropped 88,000 tons of explosives, some of them laced with depleted uranium, in 110,000 air sorties over a period of six weeks. Experts link increased incidence of childhood leukaemia in south and central Iraq to the depleted uranium from radioactive shell material used; and the hospital doctors testify the linkage. Northern Iraq was spared of the intensity other areas had suffered, but Jihan's village was affected by the bombing. "The Americans bombed indiscriminately and my father was killed in the bombing," remembers Jebhe, Jihan's mother. It was just the beginning of their unending suffering.

Jihan's father is a farmer and the family is into small-time agriculture. They earn about 500,000 Dinars a year, barely enough to support their 36-member household. Remember, this is not the 1980s when one Iraqi Dinar fetched three US dollars. Now the exchange value for the "paper" (as some Iraqi's affectionately call the 250 Dinar currency note) is very low with one US dollar fetching over 2000 Iraqi Dinars.

Jihan's family is already in debt by couple of million Dinars, brought about by providing medical care to Jihan and others in the family. This is not a case in isolation. The hospital gives subsidised care and medicine, but the patients still have to pay more for some prescription medication, the market brands of which are very expensive. Under food for oil program, there is no embargo on medicine, but in practice, bottlenecks in approval and actual delivery delays mean needed medicine either in acute short supply or they are just unavailable.

The dismal health care scenario is made worse by an equally bad situation of access and availability of food. With an unemployment rate of over 60 per cent, and average monthly government salary being an equivalent of US$3, most of the Iraqis depend on the rations for survival. Like many other Iraqi families, Jebhe is aware of her family's inability to provide adequate nutritious food to Jihan and other children. She has also learned from doctors that immunity levels depend on nutritious food. Good food would have made Jihan's life a little more tolerable.

"We eat meat once a month. It is very expensive" says Jebhe. "We used to eat it every day before the war," she adds. Malnourishment, water-borne diseases, depleted uranium and a crippled health care system have taken a heavy toll on ordinary families like that of Jihan's. In 2002, babies with low birth weight accounted for 24.7 per cent of all births. And 23 per cent of the children aged under five are chronically malnourished. A quick glance through the neonatal ward of the hospital shows that there are too many underweight and premature babies kept in old incubators.

Still, the situation in Baghdad is better, compared with rural and interior Iraq. In Basra and other places in southern Iraq, water, power and health facilities destroyed in the 1991 bombing have not yet been restored. The sanctions imposed 12 years ago hit children the worst, though they had no role in the war. In fact, they were not even born then. UNICEF has estimated that sanctions-related causes alone have killed more than half a million children in the first ten years of the sanctions.

There are fewer children attending schools as many of them are working to make a little extra income for the family. Poverty has forced them out of schools and some of them to streets. Their future is uncertain. The playgrounds are empty, as few children use them. We check with shops selling toys and sports goods. "Nobody buys them these days. There is no money," remarks an elderly man running a small makeshift shop.

The incidence of leukaemia among the children has been increasing over the years. These cases are mass funeral in slow motion. In real time and space, this simply means immeasurable suffering to a large number of children. In three Southern Iraqi governorates, namely Basrah, Misan and Deqar that were subjected to severest bombing, the number of cancer cases has increased by 2.8, 5.7 and 4.3 times respectively in 1997, compared to 1990. The national average increase in cancer cases in this time span has been 1.7 times.

The ordeal of the Iraqi people is not over yet. The UN weapons inspectors will be submitting their report to the UN Security Council in March. The US and the British interpretations of the UN weapon's inspectors' report may decide the future of the Iraqi people. Iraqi people we spoke to in Baghdad felt that irrespective of the conclusions of the weapons inspectors, and pressure from people and governments around the world, the US and the British forces will bomb Iraq. "It is not going to be a war. It is just bombing. In a war, there are two parties fighting each other. It is one powerful force bombing defenceless people," says the taxi driver who took us to the hospital.

The plight of Jihan and her family is not a case in isolation. Hudda Ghanini, 10, Araine Abdullah Khader, 12, Aiser Saad are just some of the several thousands of children who are suffering a similar plight. The situation in Iraq's only cancer hospital - Radiology and Nuclear Therapy Hospital - is far more serious with patients all over the corridors as all the wards are full. The plight of the families of Delle Habib, 14, from Nasira, Southern Iraq (diagnosed with ovarian tumour), Jihan Ali, 17, (diagnosed with lymphoma) and Samir Fahri, 30, (a newly-married man, diagnosed with testicular cancer) and innumerable others coming to the hospital is not much different from Jihan's. They needed medicine, food, and security. Instead, they are being promised more bombs, precision bombs, if you like. In the 1991 war less than 7.4 per cent of the weapons used were so-called 'precision ordinance'. Innumerable bombs hit unintended targets, killing thousands of people.

A new war will worsen the situation to a great extent. People from all over the world oppose the unjust war imposed on an already starved and impoverished people. And the leaders of world's two great democracies refuse to listen to the voices of reason and justice. How long will this nightmare last. It is a funeral in slow motion. A war will only accelerate its pace.

(The authors visited Baghdad in the second week of February for an ActionAid mission).

Dr. Unnikrishnan (unnikru@yahoo.com) is a medical doctor working on humanitarian issues. He is associated with Actionaid and the People's Health Movement.

Prof Parasuraman (sparasuraman@hotmail.com) is the Policy Coordinator, ActionAid Asia regional office, Bangkok.

The opinions expressed need not necessarily reflect that of the organisation.

Join the campaign !
Sign your opposition against the war !
The threat of war in Iraq is getting closer every day. Your voice is needed before it becomes a disaster for Iraq's people.

One of the ways to register your opposition to war is by extending your solidarity to the numerous petitions facilitated by various organisations and citizen's groups. You may draft your own petition and post to the President of USA, Prime Minister of UK or to the UN's security council. If these petitions are addressed to the President of USA and/or to the Prime Minister of UK, you may send it to them or may even send it to their embassies/ high commission offices located in your country. You may even drop it in the visa collection boxes in certain cities where this facility is available.

You may mail also e-mail the messages to WeOpposeWars@yahoo.co.uk or weopposewars@yahoo.co.uk or **the ambassadors of France, China and Russia, three permanent members of the security council who are opposing the war. .**
(france-presse@un.int ; rusun@un.int ; chinamission_un@fmprc.gov.cn)

Telephone: +1-212-940-0400 / Fax: +1-212-940-0402 or or +1-212-610-9702

The following letter, written by an international humanitarian and development agency. may help as a model.

Letter from Oxfam International to the President of the UN Security Council

H.E. Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso,
Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations,
140 East 57th Street, NY 10022.

March 11th, 2003

Your Excellency,

We write concerning the possibility of military action in Iraq. We ask that you transmit our concerns to Members of the Council.

We believe that on the basis of the current evidence, military action against Iraq now would be unjustified because the case has not been made that such action would not disproportionately increase civilian suffering and fuel regional instability.

We remain deeply concerned that the most disastrous outcomes of military action are at least as likely as the most positive. The proponents of military action have no convincing evidence that military action could avoid substantial civilian suffering in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq, or igniting serious instability within Iraq or across the Middle East.

The vast majority of Iraq's civilian population relies on a water and sanitation system that is driven by the mains electrical power system, and more than 50% of the population depend on the distribution of food rations. As a result, millions of Iraqis are highly vulnerable to any military action which impacts upon the electricity supplies and the road infrastructure that underpins the distribution of food rations. Any military action that damages such 'dual use' infrastructure risks causing mass humanitarian suffering, including child mortality.

Iraq lies at the centre of a region vulnerable to increased violence. The risk of greater violence would be substantially increased by any military attack on Iraq - and any action which fuels the perception that the US and much of the international community applies one standard to Iraq and another to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We fear that even a military campaign with advance UN authority is more likely to inflame hostility between much of the Islamic world and the US, with potentially further violent consequences.

The advocates of military action have not demonstrated that any threat from Iraqi weapons of mass destruction poses such an imminent threat that these risks can be outweighed. On the basis of the evidence before us, we cannot see that any plan to use military force to achieve the stated aims of the Council to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction can be justified.

Yours faithfully,

****

Model letter to the President of USA and/or the Prime Minister of UK

Dear Tony Blair &/ Mr. George Bush,

I am deeply concerned that the human suffering caused by a war against Iraq will be horrific. There are enormous risks to Iraqi civilians' food supply, clean water, and safe sanitation, as well as the danger of many civilian casualties. No-one has shown an imminent threat to outweigh these risks. I appeal to you NOT to start this war.

Mr. Tony Blair
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
UNITED KINGDOM
SW1A 2AA

Mr. George W. Bush
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
email: president@whitehouse.gov

Bombing on Iraq was equivalent of 7 Hiroshimas.
In fact, it was worse than that.

1991: US and its allies dropped 88,500 tons of explosives in Iraq and Kuwait. This was the equivalent of 7 Hiroshimas.
Source: New York Times (15 Jan 1992), quoted by John Pilger in Hidden Agendas

Many of the bombs dropped by the US and their allies in Iraq were coated with depleted uranium (a deadly radioactive material).

1991: Munitions made from depleted uranium (DU) was used for the first time in Iraq. DU has a radioactive life of 125,000 years and like the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam, its affects on the population and on future generations will be insidious and devastating.
Source: John Pilger in Hidden Agendas

This war is not only about oil; it is also about expanding the arms market and recolonisation:

Iraq has the world's second largest oil reserve worth billions of dollars.

Within a year after the 1991 Gulf War, the sale of American arms rose by 64 %. Within three years after the Gulf war, Britain accounted for 20 % of the arms market.
Source: John Pilger, Hidden Agendas

The annual global arms expenditure today is over 800 billion US dollars.
Source: UNDP

Depleted uranium is a killer:

1991: Around 50,000 children have died in the initial weeks of the US bombing due to the use of depleted uranium.

Source: Quoted by Dr. Rosalie Bertell, PLANET EARTH: The Latest Weapon of War

In the three Governerates of Iraq (Basrah, Misan and Deqar), the number of cancer cases has increased by 2.8, 5.7 and 4.3 times respectively in 1997, compared to 1990. The national average increase in Iraq during that time was 1.7 times. Experts are linking the increased incidence of cancer with the Depleted Uranium.

Credible estimates of the total possible deaths on all sides during the conflict and the following three months range from 48,000 to over 260,000.

Civil war within Iraq could add another 20,000 deaths.

Additional later deaths from post-war adverse health effects could reach 200,000. In all scenarios the majority of casualties will be civilians.

If nuclear weapons were used the death toll could reach 3,900,000. the UK and US have not ruled out the nuclear first-strike option.

The financial burden will be enormous on all sides, with arms spending, occupation costs, relief and reconstruction possibly exceeding $150-200bn. The US is likely to spend $50bn - $200bn on the war and $5bn - 20bn annually on the occupation.

US$100 billion would fund about 4 years of expenditure to address the health needs of the world's poorest people.
Source: Collateral Damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq, November 2002 (MEDACT and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War - winner of the Nobel Peace Prize)

US $ 9 billion will provide water and sanitation for the people in the third world - a place where waterborne diseases kill millions of children every year.
Source: UNDP

Each month 5,000 to 6,000 children die as a result of the sanctions.
(WHO, 1998).
This is a mass murder in slow motion.
Another war will fast forward this.

STOP the war.

Depleted Uranium's impacts:

"Before 1991, we rarely used to get such (leukemia) cases, say, a maximum of two such cases every three months. But now, we get more than two such cases, every week."
Source: Dr. Alam, paediatrician, Saddam Central Paediatric and Teaching Hospital, Baghdad (Quoted in "Children of a lesser world"- True account story of two humanitarian workers who visited Iraq for an ActionAid mission in Feb, 2003)

"Cancer rates (in Iraq) appear to be significantly higher than the world average ... The suspected culprit is depleted uranium, a toxic and radioactive metal extensively used in the bombing by the US and their allies".
Source: Dr. Rosalie Bertell, PLANET EARTH

February 1991. **300-400 women & children died.**

"Nearly all the bodies were charred into blackness, in some cases the heat had been so great that entire limbs were burned off. Among the corpses were those of at least six babies and ten children, most of them so severely burned that their gender could not be determined..."
Source: Quoted in Columbia Journalism Review, 1991

"Long after the war was over, a senior American official admitted that the bunker bombing had been 'a military mistake'"
Source: John Pilger Hidden Agendas

Sanctions kill:

More than 1.2 million people, including 750,000 children below the age of five, have died because of the scarcity of food and medicine. Approximately 250 people die every day in Iraq due to the sanctions.

32 percent of children under age 5, some 960,000 children, are chronically malnourished - a rise of 72 percent since 1991.

23% are underweight - twice as high as the levels found in neighboring Jordan or Turkey.

Infant mortality rate has gone up from 47 per 1000 births before sanctions to over 108 after it. That is more than 100 per cent increase in ten years.

Source: UNICEF Report, Page 42, 30 April 1998

"Less than 7 % of the weapons used in the Gulf war were 'smart' weapons (electronically guided to reach targets), as the Pentagon admitted after the war"
Source :International Herald Tribune as quoted by John Pilger in Hidden Agendas

Suggested readings:
www.antiwar.com
www.stopwar.org.uk
www.altnet.org
www.air.org
www.counterpunch.org
www.mediaresearch.org
www.indymedia.org
www.zmag.org
www.mediaguardian.co.uk
www.stopwar.org
www.pomPaine.com
www.borc.org
www.MoveOn.org
www.publicintegrity.org
www.medact.org

In Iraq, over 6,000 children die due to sanctions-related reasons every month.

Over 7,50,000 **children died between 1991 and 2001, according to UN agencies.**

During the 1991 war, the US and its allies dropped 88,500 tons of explosives, the equivalent of 7 Hiroshima bombs. Many of them were laced with Depleted Uranium. Experts link this to high increase in leukemia in Iraq.